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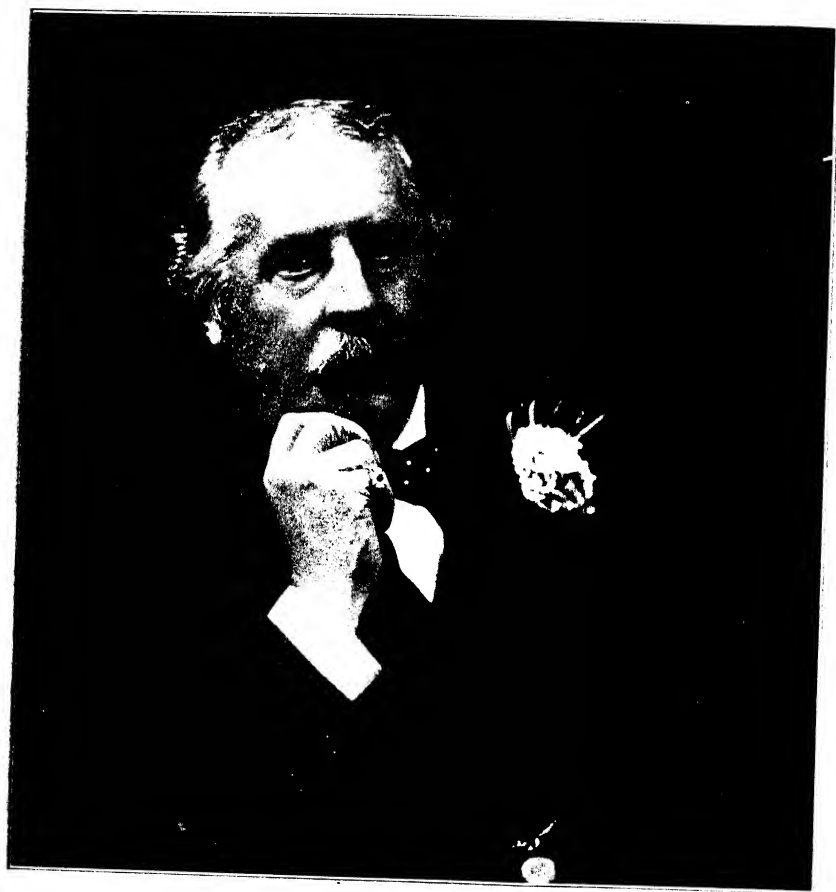












*[Photo by H. Walter Barnett.]*

*Clement Scott.*  
*1899*

THE DRAMA  
OF  
YESTERDAY & TO-DAY

BY  
CLEMENT SCOTT

IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I

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RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,  
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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK  
TO  
THE DRAMATIC ARTISTS,  
OF EVERY CLIME AND COUNTRY,  
WHO ARE HERE  
BY RIGHT AND HONOUR INCORPORATED,  
AND, WITH REVERENCE,  
TO MY FAITHFUL WIFE,  
HERSELF AN ARTIST,  
WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO ATTEMPT THIS TASK  
AND LOYALLY ASSISTED ME TO  
ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

CLEMENT SCOTT.

1899.





## PREFACE

IN attempting to blend in these pages the outlines of the history of the stage for the last fifty years with personal reminiscences, I have endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to avoid anything that might be described as "acrimonious controversy."

But, be it history or reminiscence, it was impossible to discard strong reference to what I venture to call "the politics of the drama." The story of the stage and its brilliantly successful career, step by step, could not be told without insisting on the proved value of free trade in dramatic art, and a wholesome independence in dramatic criticism.

I shall be content, however, if it be acknowledged that no animosity has soiled the record of the past, and that I at least have remembered and tried to recall old scenes, old associations, old friendships, and celebrated players, with all the delightful and happy memories connected with them.

The drama of the Victorian era is without a doubt a most interesting, varied, and most exhaustive study.

In it we travel from the time of the patent theatres, special monopolies and protectionist privileges, all supposed to have been instituted in the interests of art, but which unquestionably retarded its progress, to the heroic and heart-breaking struggle for better things at Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and elsewhere with which must be ever connected the honoured name of William Charles Macready.

Luckily for the earnest playgoer, the Shakespearcan student, and the enthusiast for the time-honoured classics of the stage, the mantle of Macready, which fell all too soon from his sturdy shoulders, was modestly assumed by his brave and faithful lieutenant, Samuel Phelps, one of the great actors of the century whose noble work at Sadler's Wells can never be forgotten, and must ever be recorded in his eternal honour.

Loyal rivals and honourable opponents bringing with them the stress and storm and battle-cry of competition have never done the slightest harm to the stage; on the contrary, they have stimulated endeavour and strengthened enterprise. Such rivals were Samuel Phelps, the tough old warrior, and Charles Kean, the scholar, student, and archæologist. Each had his admirers; each 'camp' was filled with brave defenders of the dramatic faith. But it must never be forgotten that both these devoted soldiers and excellent actors, particularly where comedy was concerned, struggled on without the sheltering assistance of free trade.

A time must come, as has been proved again and again in the history of the drama, when the stage is,

comparatively speaking, without a leader. Macready had, but one able successor, Samuel Phelps. Charles Kean left behind him only a blank, and then ensued an interlude not very creditable or encouraging to any of us. But this regretted period of untidiness, squalor, want of originality, of French translations and comparative despair, was not wholly wasted in that the battle for free trade in dramatic art, after a desperate struggle, was fought and won, I trust for ever, and a path was cleared for those brilliant reactionaries, the Bancrofts, and the human, English school of Robertson.

It was all advance now; foreign art and methods were carefully studied to the advantage of our own; artists from every nation in the world were made welcome in England to the delight of all devoted admirers of the comprehensive drama and art universal.

It was only the strong leader, the student of the new school, the diplomatic reformer, the man of tact, and taste, and influence, and popularity, who was wanted. That man was discovered in Henry Irving, who was at once elected unanimously to the vacant throne.

If, remembering with deep gratitude the drama of yesterday and loving the drama of my own day, I pause here, I do so, believe me, with no feelings of anxiety or lassitude, with no sense of depression or despair. I hope I have proved in these pages that I am no mere "*laudator temporis acti*," as most old playgoers live to be. I trust that my close study of old actors and actresses has enabled me by comparison to give fresh encouragement to the brilliant artist of

to-day of whatever age, rank, or station. My love for the dramatic art, new or old, is only equalled by the comprehensive passion of a Juliet :

“ My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep ; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite ! ”

Still, it is impossible to study such an art without being convinced that it must be in a measure the reflection of the age in which we live, of the temper of the times, and of society as it exists. We are living to-day in a period of transition, in a time when customs are changed, when manners are not so formal, when faith is not so pronounced or alluring, and when the love of what is beautiful, and ennobling, and true, is not so absolute in the hearts of men and women. The stage, with its searching mirror, cannot afford to neglect the study of these things. And the stage has done it with uncompromising severity at the close of this remarkable century.

The Ibsen reaction, with its unloveliness, its want of faith ; its hopeless, despairing, creed ; its worship of the ugly in art ; its grim and repulsive reality, regret it as we will, is a solemn and resistless fact. At the outset, some of us, conscientiously and in the interests of the art we loved and had followed with such persistency, tried to laugh it out of court. But the time came when the laugh was on the other side. I own it ; I admit it.

We may ascribe it to the change of tone and thought at our public schools and universities, to our godless

method of education, to the comparative failure of religion as an influence, to this, that, or the other. But there it is. We cannot get away from it. Society has accepted the satire, and our dramatists of the first class have one after the other broken away from the beautiful, the helpful, and the ideal, and coquetted with the distorted, the tainted, and the poisonous in life. Any appeal to them in the name of art is vain. According to their utilitarian creed, all must be good that pays: and so for the moment our theatres are crowded to excess to see "snap-shot society dramas" with their pronounced vulgarity, their hideous presentments of men and women, and their cheap satire.

Arguing by analogy, these things cannot last. They are temporary, trivial, and evasive. They are the outcome of a certain phase of civilisation and a period of profound peace and want of action. A national disaster, a war of right and justice, a hideous crime such as has recently been committed in another country which has provoked the magnificent denunciation of the civilised world, bids us all who love the drama to "thank God and take courage." Deep hidden somewhere under all this superficiality and artificiality will be found the human heart. It may be weak and feeble, but it beats on still. Human nature has been, must be, and will ever be the pulse, the power, and the life-beat of the drama in the land of William Shakespeare.

In conclusion, I have to thank most sincerely Mr. H. Walter Barnett, Mons. Adolphe Beau, all the popular

photographic artists, and others possessing legal copy-right, for their kind permission to illustrate my story by pen and pencil, without which favour the book must have lost a most interesting feature.

But my best thanks must be reserved for my old friend, Austin Brereton, associated with me in past, but never forgotten, days of the "Theatre Magazine," who has given me the fruits of his wide experience and accurate mind in revising the proof sheets of this book; and has compiled for me its exhaustive index, which I trust will be of great value to students of the present and the future who are and will be as devoted as we are to the art we both admire and love!

CLEMENT SCOTT.

6th October, 1899.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
"THE EARLY FORTIES" . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II

"THE EARLY FORTIES"—"MERRIE ISLINGTON" . . . . .	27
--	----

## CHAPTER III

"THE EARLY FORTIES"—PLAYS AND ACTORS . . . . .	59
--	----

## CHAPTER IV

"MY FIRST PLAY" . . . . .	111
---------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V

"SADLER'S WELLS AND SAMUEL PHELPS" . . . . .	146
--	-----

## CHAPTER VI

"SAMUEL PHELPS—A FREE LANCE" . . . . .	182
--	-----



## CHAPTER VII

	PAGE
"THE EARLY STRUGGLE OF CHARLES KEAN!" . . . . .	204

## CHAPTER VIII

"THE SUCCESS OF CHARLES KEAN" . . . . .	240
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX

"THE FAREWELL OF CHARLES KEAN" . . . . .	279
--	-----

## CHAPTER X

"BOHEMIA IN DAYS OF OLD" . . . . .	307
------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XI

"THE DECADENT DRAMA" . . . . .	354
--------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XII

"HOW I BECAME A DRAMATIC CRITIC" . . . . .	398
--	-----

## CHAPTER XIII

"EARLY DAYS AS A DRAMATIC CRITIC" . . . . .	427
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIV

"THE DAWN OF THE RENAISSANCE" . . . . .	471
---	-----

---

CHAPTER XV

	PAGE
"THE SUCCESS OF TOM ROBERTSON" . . . . .	492

CHAPTER XVI

"ANOTHER STEP UP THE LADDER" . . . . .	532
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII

"THE REIGN OF THE BANCROFTS" . . . . .	559
--	-----



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
CLEMENT SCOTT . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ROBSON AND HORACE WIGAN. GEO. BELMORE ("The Deal Boatman"). ROBSON ("Chimney Corner"). FECHTER AND W. LACY (in "Ruy Blas") . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 36
J. L. TOOLE ("Dinorah under Difficulties"). LIONEL BROUGH. WALTER LACY. HARRY MONTAGUE . . . . .	,, , 62
LOUISE KEELEY. BOB KEELEY. MR. AND MRS. KEELEY . . . . .	,, , 76
JOHN OXENFORD (Critic of <i>The Times</i> ). H. J. BYRON. J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON . . . . .	,, , 86
MRS. DION BOUCICAULT. DION BOUCICAULT. MISS HERBERT ("Isle of St. Tropez"). ALFRED WIGAN ("Isle of St. Tropez") . . . . .	,, , 100
CHARLES MATHEWS (in his entertainment at the Bijou Theatre, Haymarket) . . . . .	,, , 132
SAMUEL PHELPS, OF SADLER'S WELLS . . . . .	,, , 146
MARIE LITTON. ADA CAVENDISH. MISS HEATH (Mrs. Wilson Barrett). PATTIE OLIVER . . . . .	,, , 164
J. L. TOOLE (Caleb Plummer). BUCKSTONE . . . . .	,, , 202
CHARLES KEAN (Richard the Second) . . . . .	,, , 240
CHARLES KEAN (Louis the Eleventh). WALTER LACY (John of Gaunt, "Richard the Second") . . . . .	,, , 254
CHARLES KEAN AND ELLEN TERRY (Leontes, Mamillius—"Winter's Tale") . . . . .	,, , 282
LYDIA FOOTE ("Ticket of Leave Man"). MISS BUFTON. MRS. SCOTT SIDDONS. LYDIA THOMPSON ("Middy Ashore"). MARIE WILTON ("Myles-na-Coppaleen") . . . . .	,, , 324



# THE DRAMA OF YESTERDAY

## CHAPTER I

### “THE EARLY FORTIES”

“Look here upon this picture, and on this.”

The 6th of October, 1841!

And now behold the closing hours of a century that has, without a doubt, done more for the elevation of dramatic art, the dignity of the theatre, the social position of the actor and actress, and the upholding of the doctrine of free trade, where amusements of the people are concerned, than any century that has preceded it. We, who love the drama, the dramatists, the players, the very atmosphere of the playhouse,—we, who have spent a lifetime in the service of an art, once fallen from its niche in the temple of the beautiful, the pure, and the true—but now happily restored—we, who have been in the forefront of many a battle, fought in a good cause, and luckily, as it has turned out, a successful one,—have excellent reason to be proud of the Victorian Era of dramatic art.

Why then do I choose this exact date in 1841 that I have already quoted? Was it that it precedes by a very few weeks the date of the birth of that eminent patron

of the theatre, that cordial, genial and irrepressible playgoer, that best friend to the "poor player," who ever welcomed, recognised and assisted his art; that august personage with the faultless memory, who has seen every great actor and actress, from William Charles Macready to Henry Irving, that patron of the play in the highest, noblest, and least submissive sense, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales?

Was it that, about this time, were produced in London close upon sixty years ago, two plays that have, in spite of the buffets of time, and change, and circumstance, remained stage classics to this hour; thereby upholding my contention, that a good play with heart and life and humour in it, never failed, and never will fail, except through the fault of its interpreters? I allude, of course, to Bulwer Lytton's "Money," presented at the Haymarket Theatre on the 8th of December, 1840, and to Dion Boucicault's "London Assurance," which first flashed into notice on the 4th of March, 1841, and started into life one of the brightest and most workman-like dramatists of our time, who, in addition to his remarkable technical skill as a playwright, proved himself to be an Irish comedian almost without a rival, as all acknowledge who have known Tyrone Power and his predecessors. As a matter of fact, though it is not generally known, the first piece written by Dion Boucicault, under the *nom de plume* of Lee Morton, was a drama in four acts produced at the Brighton Theatre, October 1, 1834, entitled "A Legend of the Devil's Dyke," in which he acted, and, as it is reported, made a dreadful failure as Teddy Rodent, a low comedy-ratcatcher!

I have heard these famous plays, born when I was born, stage classics to this hour, called old fashioned, out of date, and sneered at as the kind of stage work that should be

kindly forgotten and forgiven. But with a Marie Bancroft or Mrs. John Wood for Lady Franklin; with a John S. Clarke, George Honey, or Arthur Cecil for Graves; a Coghlan or Forbes Robertson for Alfred Evelyn; a John Hare for Sir John Vesey; a Kate Rorke or Lena Ashwell for Clara Douglas; a Squire Bancroft for Sir Frederick Blount; and a David James for Stout; the old and despised "Money" would be as popular to-day as yesterday.

Do you think that "London Assurance" would fail with a Farren for a Sir Harcourt Courtley, a Charles Mathews for Dazzle, and a Nisbett for Lady Gay? Perish the thought!

Why, then, the 6th of October, 1841? Well, as I am anxious to tell my story my own way, and with the light of my own experience,—as I desire to give a general survey of the dramatic scene as it has passed before my eyes as a stage-struck lad, an enthusiastic pittite, a very serious amateur, and a possibly too earnest critic,—I naturally begin at my own beginning. This date has a peculiar and personal interest to me; for on Wednesday, the 6th of October, 1841, I was born.

It may be interesting, in order to make a start, to give a kind of universal investigation of the dramatic field, a bird's-eye view of London, its playhouses and its players, on that particular date in the early forties when I opened my eyes in Christ Church Parsonage, New North Road, Hoxton, then surrounded by fields, market gardens, and hedges of may and hawthorn; in the immediate neighbourhood of Canonbury, in whose square lived Samuel Phelps; and close to pretty Highbury, Islington, Hackney, and Dalston, to whose suburban retreats, tea-gardens, bowling-greens, and skittle-alleys the citizens of London repaired with genuine pleasure and delight:



the old people to talk of the glorious past over their churchwarden pipes and mugs of ale ; the young folk, to make love and drink weak "tea in the arbour."

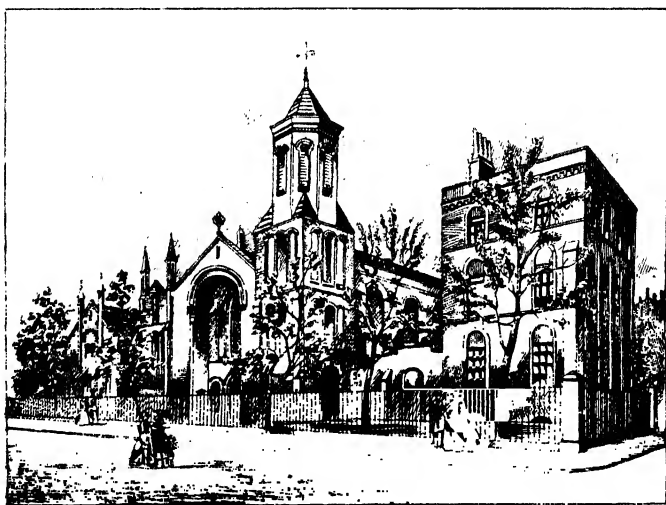
It has often been urged, with placid and defiant indifference to fact, and, if not deliberately stated, at least ingenuously suggested in the interests of the favourites of the hour, that literature and the drama were never synonymous terms until a very recent period ; and that the art of acting in this country is an absolutely modern product, sown probably, but indefinitely, by steady old Paul, but watered by young and self-advertising Apollos.

Now let us come to "cues," as the actors say. The close of the Victorian Era sparkles with fiction—let us condescend to facts. Two days before I was born, viz., on Monday, the 4th of October, 1841, Macready, who had scored a genuine success as Alfred Evelyn in "Money"—in fact he played it at the Haymarket that very night—announced that Drury Lane would reopen under his management on the 27th of December, 1841, after all arrangements were satisfactorily completed. He declared his aim to be the task of "advancing the Drama as a Branch of National Literature and Art," and the early production of the plays of Shakespeare unaltered, un-Colley Cibberized, unadulterated, and with the original text.

This is nothing more nor less than the aim of the student managers of to-day, be they Irvings, Trees, or Alexanders. They were doing it sixty years ago.

We frequently applaud the pupils: but do not let us forget the pioneers. The strenuous efforts of a Macready, a Phelps, and a Charles Kean are often forgotten in an age of self-advertisement, wherein certain excellent, ambitious, and right-minded actor managers gain credit

for originating and laying down a new plan of action ; whereas in reality they sometimes follow in the actual footsteps of their predecessors and with the self-same ambition produce the self-same plays, Shakespearean or otherwise, in precisely the self-same order ; but with this difference—the modern manager is assisted by the aid of modern science, modern mechanism, modern luxury, modern scenic appliance and modern dress. Thus their



CHRIST CHURCH PARSONAGE, NEW NORTH ROAD, HOXTON.  
Birthplace of Clement Scott, October 6th, 1841.

fame is trumpeted forth as masters of art ; but in many cases they are merely disciples, worthily following those who have preceded them.

As regards the advantages possessed by modern managers in producing plays, how few know—and of those who know how many have forgotten—that candles were used to light the Haymarket Theatre as late as the year 1843, the terms of the then lease prohibiting the

introduction of gas. I learned this from Walter Lacy, and it was confirmed by the veteran and excellent actor Henry Howe, who in the year 1880 sent me a bill of the Haymarket Theatre, dated Friday, the 28th of April, 1843, which settles two important questions as to the use of gas, and the other modern innovation of orchestra stalls, an improvement that was cordially detested by Charles Mathews, who never ceased to inveigh against the chattering and ogling that they encouraged.

This is what the old Haymarket bill says :

“During the recess the theatre has undergone extensive alterations, the proscenium has been entirely remodelled, and the whole of the interior redecorated in the most costly and elegant style. By a curtailment of a useless portion of the stage or front of the curtain, and advancing the orchestra and lights nearer the actors and scenic effects, the lessee, Mr. Benjamin Webster, has been enabled to appropriate the portion so obtained to form a certain number of orchestra stalls which can be retained for the parties taking them the whole of the evening. For the comfort of those visiting the pit, backs have been placed to all the seats. Among the most important improvements is the introduction for the first time of gas as the medium of light. A brilliant centre chandelier has been erected, and no expense spared to render this establishment deserving its high character, and the support of the patrons of the drama.”

On that evening the “School for Scandal” was played, with old Farren as Sir Peter. In the cast were Strickland, Brindal, Tom Stuart, Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, and Mrs. Glover. This was followed by “Patter versus Clatter,” in which Charles Mathews appeared ; and “The Bashful Irishman,” with Henry

Howe as Captain Pester, the part of Terence O'Gallagher falling to Mr. Leonard, the substitute for Tyrone Power, father of my good friend Harold Power, who had left for America, and, alas, never returned, having been drowned at sea in the *President*. The story of Tyrone Power's death was well told by his friend Paul Bedford.

"After the completion of his second tour of the States, which had resulted far more profitably than the former one, he was on the eve of departure for the home country, having taken his berth aboard a fast-going clipper ship, the same craft that had brought him safely from old Albion; 'but,' as the poet observes, 'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune'; and my friend had experienced that prediction to the full: but what a sad reverse of fortune the ebb of that same tide brought with it, as the following incident will demonstrate. At that same period the celebrated and world-renowned *President* steamer was on the eve of departure. Power accompanied a friend to the office who was anxious to secure a berth for the voyage, but was disappointed, for every available space had been disposed of. My friend Power, in overhauling the log-book of passengers, discovered the name of Lord Fitzroy Lennox, whose sire was the late Duke of Richmond, and the intimate friend and patron of the Doomed Irish Boy, Rory O'More, who inquired of the official at the booking-office if there would be any chance of one of the secured berths being given up? The reply was in the negative; at which information my friend was greatly disappointed; but an event occurred on his way from the office that put him in tip-top spirits. Good fortune threw in his path Mr. Joseph Wood, who, in

conjunction with his wife, *née* the celebrated Miss Paton, had just completed a most profitable operative tour of the States. Power said, 'Joe, my dear fellow, I see by the log-book of the *President* that you have secured a berth aboard that noble craft.' 'I have,' replied Joseph; 'and I wish I could find any one that would take it off my hands.' 'I will,' said Power, 'and thank you for the bargain.' He at the same time told Joseph that he had secured a first-rate cabin aboard a sailing ship, and, if agreeable, they would exchange quarters. The proposition was joyfully accepted by both. They shook the hands of friendship for the last time, wishing each other a prosperous voyage, and parted: little did they imagine, at the separation, that their eyes were never again destined to gaze on each other's manly form; alas, such is the mutability of human affairs. But, gentle reader, no doubt you will wonder at the change of sentiment that came o'er my operative friend Wood. He considered that it would not be agreeable to his wife to be associated with a branch of that noble family with one of whose members she had formed her first matrimonial alliance, and who was uncle to the lost and lamented young lord who met the fate of all the dear souls that voyaged in that monster ship."

Tyrone Power's last appearance on the stage was on the 9th of March, 1841, at the Park Theatre, New York, as Gerald Pepper, in S. Lover's drama, "The White Horse of the Pepper's" and Morgan Rattler in his own farce, "How to Pay the Rent." The *President* steamed from New York, on the 21st of March, 1841, and was last seen on the 24th labouring against heavy rolling seas, but was never heard of afterwards. There were 109 persons on board.

I may later on discuss the value of orchestra stalls at

half a guinea each with their well-dressed, occasionally talkative, and frequently inanimate occupants, as against the good old pit, full of fire and enthusiasm, which, in many theatres in my early days of playgoing, reached right up to the orchestra. Charles Mathews, as I have already said, and other actors, never wearied of telling me how they loved to play to the pit, how the listlessness of the stalls continually distracted them, or how one talkative couple was able to disturb and unnerve a sensitive artist.

Theatrical tradition dies hard ; it must have remained longer than elsewhere at the Haymarket Theatre in the consulship of Benjamin Webster and John Baldwin Buckstone. As we have seen, it was in Webster's day when the "candle snuffer" disappeared, and gas brightened the dear old oblong theatre, where, as late as 1860, the critics and the most favoured patrons were always accommodated in the front row of the dress circle, and this, after all, is the best possible place from which any play can be seen. I myself like to look across or to look down—not to look up—at the spectacle and the scene.

But it was at the Haymarket, in the days of Buckstone, and, indeed, later even than that, that there might have been seen the old courteous ceremonial of welcoming Royalty by the manager, scrupulously attired in evening dress and white kid gloves, bearing in either hand a lighted wax candle, and walking backwards, occasionally with some difficulty, to the Royal box. Thus her Majesty, the Prince Consort—at one time a devoted playgoer—and the Royal children—were always ushered into the theatre; and at no playhouse was this custom more religiously observed than at the little theatre in the Haymarket, which has ever been, and still

remains, one of the most popular houses in London, and, I may add, the best theatrical property.

But all this time you will be wondering what plays were performed in London on this much-insisted date, the 6th of October, 1841, my very first of the forties. What are they doing at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden—the last old Covent Garden Theatre, remember—that was burned down, well, within memory, after a fancy ball inaugurated by Professor Anderson, a wizard, a juggler, an amateur actor, and one of the showiest advertisers of the time, a kind of baby Barnum like E. T. Smith, but one who had no association with art in any respect whatever?

Yes, Covent Garden fell, when I was old enough to understand what the destruction of an historic playhouse meant, and I was amongst the visitors on the opening night of its successor, the present Covent Garden Opera House, in the days of Louisa Pyne and William Harrison, father of our clever poet and reciter, Clifford Harrison. I also saw Her Majesty's Theatre—then the Opera House in the Haymarket—burned to the ground, the grand house identified with Lumley, the impresario, distinguished for its splendid auditorium of a horseshoe shape, and the celebrated amber satin curtains, and the centre avenue of “Fops' Alley,” as it was called, the theatre where my dear mother was nearly crushed to death witnessing the début of Jenny Lind; the theatre which is charged with delightful memories of Piccolomini in “*La Fille du Régiment*,” and that exquisite tenor, Giuglini, who, if ever man did, “sang like an angel”; and the majestic Titiens, for whose Leonora in “*Fidelio*” I poured out all the half-crowns I could find for a gallery seat.

Now here is a surprising fact! Of all the theatres in

existence when I was born, how many do you think are still standing, comparatively unchanged and unaltered? Only three! The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane; the Lyceum Theatre; and the Marylebone Theatre. Every other playhouse has been reconstructed, altered, patched, improved, destroyed, deserted, or burned to the ground. I saw the last Surrey Theatre disappear in flames from the windows of the Arundel Club, in Salisbury Street, Strand. Fire and the necessary mania for rebuilding have played havoc with the London theatres of the early forties.

Let us get back to Covent Garden in 1841. They are playing a drama written by Mark Lemon, called "Vanity, or What will the World Say?" a title that was accidentally reproduced in this year of 1899 by Mr. George Pleydell Bancroft, the youngest of our dramatists, and son of a highly gifted mother and father, who have had so much to do with the brilliant success of the modern theatre, and the social status of the modern actor.

At Covent Garden, just when I opened my eyes in this wonderful world, I might have seen in one cast Charles Mathews, and old Farren, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Orger, and Mrs. Humby—I dare not repeat the Listonian jingle—and Diddear, and James Vining, and dear old Granby, who migrated to the Theatre Royal, Dublin, where he was an enormous favourite, as recently as the era of Johnny Toole.

Such experienced actors as old Granby taught the youngsters how to act, and he was one of the very finest specimens of the old stock companies that could be readily quoted to-day. He was an actor and an artist who went to the provinces with his acquired experience, and who remained there to aid his more



youthful and weaker brethren. That was the real school of acting, when novices, and fledglings who could not fly were taken in hand by rare actors like old Granby. There was no nonsense or affectation in those days. The public might have been exacting, but it knew what was good. A merely pretty face, or a photographer's model, or a society schoolgirl, would not have done for the playgoers of the early forties. Actors and actresses in those unjustly abused times were bound to know how to speak, how to elocute, how to deliver their sentences, how to move, how to fence, how to dance, and how to carry their talents over the footlights. They had no society to help them, to take them up, or to spoil them. They were hardworking people, artists if they succeeded—never amateurs.

Managers certainly knew how to give a long evening's entertainment in the early forties, for, in addition to "What will the World Say?"—I fear it has proved a fatal title more than once—they gave "Animal Magnetism," in which Walter Lacy, old Farren, Harley, Miss Cooper and Mrs. Orger appeared, and, to conclude, a ballet called "Hans of Iceland."

On the following evening, "She Would and She Would Not" was followed by "Caught Napping," which, according to the papers, was "irrevocably damned," so the less said about it the better. They spoke out strongly in those old days, when hissing was not a lost art, when the public dictated to the manager, who was the servant, not the master of the audience, and came on to the stage, hat in hand, to accept a verdict of approbation or reproof, instead of, as in these days, grandiloquently speechifying to the public, dictating terms, protesting against fair criticism, and airing views and theories to his patrons.

"Money" was still running at the Haymarket, with a slightly altered cast, for Mrs. Stirling,—a beautiful woman, who made her first appearance at the Olympic in 1840, took up the character of Clara Douglas in the place of Helen Faucit, who created the part. But what a programme! After Bulwer Lytton's play came "Foreign Affairs," which, by the way, was the title of John Leech's first cartoon in *Punch*—signed with the little bottle containing a leech. In the second play of the evening, Madame Celeste, Strickland, Benjamin Webster, Miss P. Horton—the loveliest and comeliest Ariel ever seen, the kindly lady who afterwards became Mrs. German Reed—as well as Mrs. Stirling, appeared. The bill wound up with "The Boarding School," with once more Benjamin Webster, David Rees, the original Stout in "Money," who made the great success of the evening, and died three years after in Dublin; Fred Vining, again Mrs. Stirling and Miss P. Horton, and in addition that excellent actress, Mrs. Frank Matthews.

Think of that, you young actresses of to-day, who consider yourselves over fatigued with one play and with salaries ten times as much as your predecessors. In one evening's entertainment in 1841 we had Mrs. Stirling as Clara Douglas in "Money," as the Baroness Fitzstout in "Foreign Affairs," and as Caroline Blythe in "The Boarding School." Then might have been seen Miss Priscilla Horton as Georgina Vesey in "Money," as Lady Bell in "Foreign Affairs," and as Miss Marie Mite in "The Boarding School." But the actors were just as hardly used; for do we not find Benjamin Webster, who was a perfect tiger for work, playing Graves, Sir James Courtall, and Lieutenant Varley on the same evening!

What are they doing at the Theatre Royal, Adelphi, in the Strand, as managed by the celebrated Frederic Yates, father of my dear old friend Edmund Yates, of whom as dramatist, journalist, novelist, and best of good companions I shall have much to say when I come to the Pelham Crescent days of Charles Mathews, and his hospitable, delightful and pretty wife? They are playing at the Adelphi what in those days was called a "burletta," a term originally invented to get over the odious protectionist and ridiculously conservative rule which secured a monopoly of plays proper—Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Sheridan, and so on—for the "patent" theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The "burletta" on this occasion was named "*Die Hexen am Rhein*," in which appeared the famous O. Smith, Wieland—who was considered by E. L. Blanchard the best pantomimist he had ever seen—Edward Wright, the finest farce actor of his time, Paul Bedford, Miss Chaplin, who came from Liverpool, and made a most successful impression in London, Mrs. H. P. Grattan, Miss E. Terry—not of course to be confounded with "*Our Ellen*" of later days—and Mrs. Yates, the mother of Edmund, and wife of the "great Frederic."

"*Die Hexen am Rhein*" was a three-act drama, translated from the German by E. Stirling, in which real water was used. The star of the piece was Mons. Bilrin, a Belgian giant, eight feet high. Mrs. E. Fitzwilliam—then Ellen Chaplin—played a Prince who, on being led to execution, escapes by jumping into the water and swimming away. This effect is done by a "double," the "double" being Master Spencer Forde, who, previous to this West-End engagement, had been playing Irish parts at the old Garrick. At that time the now recognised term "Principal Boy" was not

invented, such characters were known to the theatrical profession as "Breeches Parts."

In those days they were famous for burlesques of grand opera at the Adelphi. Old playgoers will tell you that they laughed until they cried over Wright and Paul Bedford in the travesty of "Norma." But on this occasion the burlesque produced was Gay's "Beggar's Opera." Mrs. Keeley was Captain Macheath; Wright, Polly Peachum; and Paul Bedford, Lucy Lockit.

At this time "Norma," with Miss Adelaide Kemble—Mrs. Sartoris—in the title name, was a great success at Covent Garden, and this was the cause of Bellini's opera being brought out at the Adelphi, on the 6th of December, 1841, where it drew crowded houses as a one-scene and one-act burlesque, by W. H. Oxberry, with the original Italian music. Mrs. Fosbrooke was Oroveso; Mrs. H. P. Grattan, Pollio; Wright, Adalgisa; and Paul Bedford, Norma, a Druidess.

On Monday, the 28th of February, 1842, there was produced at the old Queen's, under the James's management, a two-act drama by F. Mildenhall, called "Norma or the Immolation." Moss was the Oroveso; John Parry the Pollio; Mrs. Emden—then Miss Somers—a peasant girl; Adalgisa, Miss Rogers; and Norma, Mrs. John Parry.

This is how Paul Bedford describes his appearance in "Norma":

"At the conclusion of the first brilliant season of the Adelphi 'Norma,' our loved manager, Frederic Yates, gave a *soirée* at his residence in Brompton, to which were invited about one hundred of the *élite* of society, and in which *ensemble* my friend Wright and I were associated. Yates wished us to surprise the natives by being announced

and appearing as two distinguished foreign ladies, just arrived from the Continent, and to appear garbed as Norma and Adalgisa. We consented, and after the conclusion of the 'Norma' at the Adelphi, we were wheeled off in a brougham to Brompton, and heralded in to a flourish of trumpets, amid the gay throng, being received with shouts of laughter and applause by the admiring audience therein assembled.

"Such was the enthusiasm created by the 'Norma' of Covent Garden, and the 'Norma' of the Adelphi, that it had the effect of banishing this melodious opera for three successive seasons from the boards of Her Majesty's Opera House in the Haymarket.

"But the fun of the evening arrived at its climax when these two girls were seen waltzing; and Norma's petticoats, being inconveniently long, had the effect of tripping her up some two or three times.

"In the following season the Adelphi 'Norma' was afflicted with a severe hoarseness, and, in her dilemma, she rushed to her wonderful doctor, of shampoo celebrity, Horatio Sake Deen Mahomed, and luxuriated in one of his magical baths.

"The doctor advised me to inhale the floating vapour. I did so for a long time. 'Now,' said he, 'try your voice,' and I began chanting that pathetic ballad 'Jolly Nose.' At this moment the bell in the adjoining apartment rang; the doctor disappeared, and on entering the room, the occupant said, 'Ah! ah! I know who my neighbour is! It is "Jolly Nose" Paul! Will you, Doctor, ask him to oblige me by singing the song through?' At the request I complied, and my admiring friend in the next bath-room was none other than Prince Louis Napoleon!

"I wonder if I went as a wandering minstrel and breathed forth that musical effusion beneath the windows

of the Tuileries, whether I should be invited in to partake of a refresher? By-the-by, I shall have more to say of the Prince anon."

Here is the end of Paul Bedford's story about the Emperor Napoleon:

"But as I am now recounting deeds of the drama well known to every schoolboy, I will wander away to the United States of America, where, on the first visit of my dear lamented friend Tyrone Power, he found a resident of New York who had been an intimate friend of his in London, in the person of Prince Louis Napoleon. The Prince requested Tyrone would confer on him the pleasure of becoming his travelling companion through the States; it was joyfully granted, and after the successful tour they returned to England. And well do I remember hearing my dear friend Power say that he considered the Prince the most talented man he had ever met.

"Soon after his return home, Tyrone gave a dinner-party to celebrate the occasion. Among the visitors were Prince Louis, Count d'Orsay, Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, Sir George Wombwell, Mr. Benjamin Webster, and many other celebrities. After banqueting, of course the first health drunk was to the host, proposed by the then Duke of Beaufort, which was responded to by enthusiastic 'vivas.' In the course of the evening the Count d'Orsay proposed a most prophetic toast, begging the gentlemen would fill their glasses bumpers, as he was about proposing the health of the future Emperor of the French, Prince Louis Napoleon.

"The Prince arose, evidently affected at the then seemingly improbable idea of the Count's prophecy ever being realised. 'But,' said the Prince, 'the inscrutability of Providence no mortal could foretell; but all events were

probable, and the flattering wish of my friend may not be impossible.' ”

*Punch* was rather severe on the “burletta,” “Die Hexen,” and observed on the comic cut-throats Galed and Wolfstein that there were three intervals of fifteen minutes each. In one interval fifteen years were supposed to elapse, but Wolfstein appeared in the same suit of clothes. They must have worn well !

We have here probably the first of what are now called “tank dramas,” which did not require tanks at Sadler’s Wells, because the New River ran under the stage and was utilised accordingly. On the Adelphi playbill is an advertisement alluding to “Coral Caves and Crystal Streams,” and stating that they were actually obtained by hydro-scenic effects, so that the usual area devoted to illusion becomes a reality. The *Morning Advertiser* made very short work of this obvious “puff,” and declared the “burletta” to be without character or plot, its only purpose consisting in leading to some clumsy got-up scenes, in which the boards are metamorphosed into a pond for swimming and diving.

O. Smith, of the Adelphi, who died in 1855, was quite a character. Richard John Smith, or O. Smith as he was generally called, having taken the Christian name after his successful performance of Obi Smith in “Three-Fingered Jack,” was born at York in 1786. His mother was a Miss Seraces, an actress of some reputation, his father was the treasurer at the Bath Theatre. O. Smith had an adventurous life. He began as a solicitor’s clerk, but had a hankering for the stage of which his parents did not approve, so he shipped himself off to Sierra Leone. In the Gaboon he assisted two slaves to escape, and was severely punished for it. He came back to England ; was “pressed” for the navy, but liberated ; and was at

last engaged by Mr. Macready at Sheffield as prompter, painter, and actor of all work, at the liberal salary of twelve shillings a week. Thence he went to Edinburgh for two years, and returned to Bath in 1807, and appeared at the Surrey under Elliston in 1810; and it was here he got the name of O. Smith. He was great as Bombastes Furioso, and as Vulcan in "Cupid." In 1823 he made a big reputation as Zamiel in "Der Freischütz" at Drury Lane. In 1828 he made the success of the "Bottle Imp" at Covent Garden. He joined Messrs. Yates and Mathews' company soon after they took the Adelphi in 1828, and from that time until his decease remained attached to the fortunes of that theatre. His last original part was in June, 1853, in "Geneviève, or the Reign of Terror." O. Smith was very tall, had a deep, almost sepulchral voice and piercing eyes. He was extraordinarily successful in characters of the uncanny and demon type. He left behind a mass of valuable dramatic matters, which he had been collecting with a view to publication. I wonder who possesses them now?

As for Paul Bedford, with his eternal "I believe you, my boy!" which was not his original "wheeze" at all, but was borrowed from over the water, I never thought he was a funny comedian at all, though he was an Adelphi idol and beloved by the crowd, who looked upon Paul as their personal friend and chum. He was a huge man, with a deep bass voice, which had often been utilised in serious opera, and had a very grim, portly, rubicund and solemn appearance. He was the butt or foil of Ned Wright, and afterwards of Johnny Toole in all their farces at the Adelphi, both of whom he called "Father"; but, though I have met him again and again in Johnny Toole's dressing-room at the Adelphi, and at many a



party in the actors' quarters at Haverstock Hill or Camden Town, I don't think I ever heard him laugh, and he never did that great kindness for me, on or off the stage.

But, for all that, Paul Bedford was a personality, and a very popular one. He was born at Bath about 1792. He gained a moderate amount of experience there, and then went to Dublin, where he played small parts with great success. His first appearance at Drury Lane was on the 2nd of November, 1824, as Hawthorn in "Love in a Village." His first wife, Mrs. Bedford—late Miss Green—played Rosetta. She died April, 1833, aged only thirty-two. In 1833 he went to Covent Garden, and in 1838 to the Adelphi. He made his reputation there as Blueskin in "Jack Sheppard," October, 1839, to the memorable "Jack" of Mrs. Keeley, whose lamented death, after a long, busy and honourable life, we have but recently deplored, just as the dear lady was qualifying herself rapidly for a centenarian.

Old playgoers are never tired of taking us back to the year 1839, and describing Mrs. Keeley as Jack Sheppard and Paul Bedford as Blueskin. How often have they pictured to me Jack carving his name on the beam of the carpenter's shop in Wych Street, Drury Lane—a beam to which I was one dark evening introduced mysteriously by E. L. Blanchard, who knew every nook and corner of old theatrical London—and the singing by Mrs. Keeley of the old cracksman's song—

"When Claude Duval was in Newgate thrown  
He carved his name on the dungeon stone.  
Quoth a dubsman who gazed on the shattered wall,  
'You have carved your epitaph, Claude Duval,  
With your chisel so fine, tra la!'"

Mrs. Keeley was very proud of this carving exploit.

"Yes, I really did it," she used to say; "and the stage carpenters used to help me by lending their best tools, and keeping the edges well sharpened every night. They took a particular pleasure in doing this, and the public liked to see the planing on the stage—so you see they were realistic in 1839—and gave me an 'extra round' for it. It was hard work, though."

Mrs. Keeley had also much to say about the famous song, "Nix my dolly, pals, fake away," a ditty composed by Herbert Rodwell, that soon became the rage of all London.

The first verse ran thus,—

	In a box of the "stone jug" I was born, Of a hempen widow, the kid forlorn.
<i>Blueskin.</i>	Fake away!
<i>Jack.</i>	And my noble father, as I've heard say, Was a famous merchant of capers gay.
<i>Blueskin.</i>	Nix my dolly, pals, fake away!
<i>Chorus.</i>	Nix my dolly, pals, fake away!

According to Mrs. Keeley (as recorded in Walter Goodman's interesting Life of that gifted woman), "the ditty was originally intended to be sung only by the highwayman. But I suggested to Webster that it might be more effective if, after the second line, ending 'Of a hempen widow, the kid forlorn,' Blueskin were to take up the refrain, 'Fake away!' and again, 'Nix my dolly, pals,' before the repetition by the chorus. So my suggestion was adopted; and for the future Paul Bedford gave both refrains in his gruff, jovial voice and hearty manner" (Mrs. Keeley gave an excellent imitation, using the lowest tones of her own varied compass).

"This vocal souvenir of the old Adelphi favourite brought our curtain down upon 'Jack Sheppard' experiences. Before leaving this interesting subject, I

should mention that when the burlesque of 'Little Jack Sheppard' was produced at the Gaiety, with Miss Nellie Farren in the title-rôle, the original Jack went more than once to see it, and though loud in her praise of the leading performers—notably Miss Farren and the late Fred Leslie, whom she profoundly admired, both as a graceful actor and a refined dancer and singer—she did not consider that the piece itself was altogether worthy as a clever travesty."

"There is, to my way of thinking," she said, "far too little of the original story and incidents, such as Planché or A'Beckett would have introduced, and too much of the so-called 'up-to-date' music-hall business. And why—oh, why! do some of 'em persist in painting their faces like clowns? They do it in serious drama, too; and I can't for the life of me make out why. It seems to take away from the human nature of the comedian. And" (with a good-natured grimace) "it ain't pooty!" Few, who knew Mrs. Keeley, will ever forget that grimace. Her face seemed to wrinkle into a thousand puckers, and there was a lurking demon of humour in every one of them. I saw her on her last birthday at home in Pelham Crescent. She was as lively and full of anecdote then as when I first was honoured by her acquaintance.

A kind friend once gave me a celebrated playbill which announced the first appearance in London, the 2nd of July, 1825, of Miss Goward (Mrs. Keeley), as Rosina and Little Pickle in the "Spoil'd Child," which I here reproduce; as also an amusing letter addressed to my wife, and the draft of the speech which she ultimately delivered at the Lyceum Matinée in celebration of her ninetieth birthday, on the 22nd of November, 1895.

## MISS STEPHENS'S FIRST NIGHT.

The Publick are most respectfully informed, that the Theatre Royal, English Opera House, Strand, will open for the Summer Season on

Saturday next, July 2nd, 1825,

When the performances will commence with the Celebrated Overture to "Anacreon," by Cherubini.

After which (in two Acts)

## "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA" !

*Peachum*, Mr. Bartley ; *Lockit*, Mr. Tayleure ; *Captain Macheath*, Mr. Thorne (from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh) ; *Filch*, Mr. W. Chapman ; *Mat o' th' Mint*, Mr. J. Bland ; *Polly*, Miss Stephens ; *Lucy Lockit*, Miss Kelly ; *Mrs. Peachum*, Mrs. Tayleure.

To which will be added the Pastoral Opera of

## "ROSINA."

The musick composed by Mr. Shield.

*Mr. Belville* (with an additional song), Mr. Thorne ; *Captain Belville*, Mr. J. Bland ; *William*, Mr. Broadhurst ; *First Irishman*, Mr. W. Bennett, *Second Irishman*, Mr. Minton ; *Rosina*, Miss Goward (from the Theatres Royal, Norwich and York, her first appearance in London) ; *Phoebe*, Miss Kelly ; *Dorcas*, Mrs. Grove.

To conclude with (in one Act) the Musical Entertainment of

## "THE SPOILED CHILD" !

*Little Pickle* (with a hornpipe), Miss Goward ; *Old Pickle*, Mr. W. Bennett ; *John*, Mr. Salter ; *Thomas*, Mr. Lodge ; *Tag*, Mr. Tayleure ; *Miss Pickle*, Mrs. Grove ; *Maria*, Miss Southwell ; *Margery*, Mrs. Jerrold ; *Susan*, Mrs. Bryan.

Stage-Manager, Mr. Bartley.

Boxes 5s. ; Second Price 3s. ; Pit 3s. ; Second Price 1s. 6d. ; Lower Gal. 2s. ; Second Price 1s. ; Upper Gal. 1s. ; Second Price, 6d. Boxes, Places, Private and Family Boxes, to be taken of Mr. Stevenson, at the Box-Office, Strand Entrance, from 10 till 5. Doors open at half-past Six, begin at Seven. No Money returned. Vivat Rex !

On Monday, will be produced an entirely new Ballad Opera, to be called

"BROKEN PROMISES, OR THE COLONEL, CAPTAIN, AND CORPORAL" !

In which Miss Stephens will sustain a principal character.

A new and considerably enlarged orchestra has been constructed, in which a select and powerful band, of unprecedented talent, will be led by Mr. Wagstaff.

Mr. Braham is engaged, and will shortly appear in a New Grand Opera.

Mr. Mathews, for whom novel eccentric Pieces are in preparation, will again resume his dramatick situation.

Miss Paton will also appear at the conclusion of her engagement at Covent Garden Theatre.

“10, PELHAM CRESCENT, S W.,  
“October, 1895.

“DEAR MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT,—I have promised a young lady to give her an introduction to your husband, *provided I have his permission to do so*. Now I am quite sure he has no time to waste upon young aspirants who think that an introduction to him would secure an engagement *at once*, so you can spare him much trouble by sending me a line to say he is so much engaged at present, he has not a moment to spare for any body.

“With all good wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year, and kind regards to Monsieur, believe me,

“Yours sincerely,

“MARY ANNE KEELEY.”

These are Mrs. Keeley's rough notes for a speech to be written by me on the ninetieth birthday ceremony :—

“On this stage seventy years ago, I stood, a trembling novice, waiting the verdict of a London audience.

“I was led on the stage by that great artist Fanny Kelly, to whom I owe grateful remembrances and a few hints in acting. From that time what a galaxy of talent I have seen, and, in a *small way*, mixed with!

“I have acted with Kitty Stevens, Braham, Edmund Kean, the Kembles and a host of great celebrities of that day, and I have also acted with many celebrities of the present day. The last time was with our dear old friend Mr. Toole (may his shadow never be less!)

“I halt here, but I think that if some kind friend would revise the foregoing, put it into shipshape and lead up to the following by Ashby Sterry—

“ ‘ I've shaken Henry Irving by the hand,  
And Edmund Kean's I've clasped, so understand,  
I feel I'm hither brought on mission vast,  
A link between the present and the past.”

"And then—

"The veteran's goodbye."

Paul Bedford had an excellent voice (he had sung in Beethoven's "Fidelio" with Schroeder-Devrient), which stood him in good stead at the Princess's; but his best successes were principally connected with the Adelphi; and old playgoers are never tired of alluding to Paul Bedford's Jack Gong in "The Green Bushes" and his Kinchin in "Flowers of the Forest." He appeared for a short time before his death at Weston's Music Hall in Holborn, and at the Hall-by-the-Sea at Margate, and had a complimentary benefit given him at Drury Lane in 1868. He died in 1871, and was buried in Norwood Cemetery.

On the occasion of a farewell benefit given to Paul Bedford at the New Queen's in 1868, the special features of the afternoon were a selection from "Flowers of the Forest," in which he made his last appearance as the Kinchin, his original character, and a portion of the third act of "Othello."

This was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion. Edward Askew Sothern, the elder, ever on the look-out for a joke, practical or otherwise, played Othello, Buckstone was cast for Iago, the Cassio was Walter Gordon, the Desdemona Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal), and the Emilia Mrs. Chippendale. Sothern burlesqued the character of Othello, appearing in the well-known whiskers and eyeglass of Lord Dundreary, and introduced Dundrearyisms in the Shakespearean rôle. As the majority of the cast did not burlesque their parts at all, Sothern's joke, such as it was, produced unmistakable signs of disapprobation from the audience. He stepped forward, and, to excuse himself, said that it was done

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for a benefit; and that if he and Mr. Buckstone had been asked to turn somersaults they would have tried to do so, even at the risk of breaking their necks. Buckstone said at the end of the scene, that if he and Sothern had made fools of 'themselves, it was only to benefit a brother actor.

## CHAPTER II

### “THE EARLY FORTIES”—“MERRIE ISLINGTON”

“MERRIE ISLINGTON” has played rather an important part in the drama of the last half of the nineteenth century. Here, or hereabouts, the old-fashioned tea-gardens were planned, with cosy little arbours, “for talking age and whispering lovers made,” bowling-greens, and skittle-alleys among the trees, and a convenient inn, with what was known as a “parlour” in the background, dedicated to debate at night on parochial or political matters by the residents and tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Here, on high days and holidays, they let off fireworks and unloosed balloons, which came soaring constantly over the house where I was born, sometimes so close that I could distinctly see the aeronauts in the car and the ballast descending in the direct course of our chimney pots. Here, within a very short distance of the New North Road, existed the Grecian, the Albert, and the Britannia Saloons, the pioneers of equally famous theatres, when dramatic free trade was pronounced. Here, within a stone’s throw of the well-known Angel inn at Islington, once dedicated to coaching, and famous for a fascinating cordial described as “white rum,” stood the at one time popular Sadler’s Wells Theatre, the home of the celebrated Joey Grimaldi,



and afterwards the historic scene of the noble efforts of Samuel Phelps in the direct interest of the Shakespearean, poetic, and what was then styled as "the legitimate drama."

When we talk so glibly of the good work of those who have encouraged the drama of to-day, do not let us wholly forget the staunch, the sturdy, and the yeoman's labour of the upholders of the drama of yesterday. Alone, unbacked by banks, or syndicates, or wealthy patrons, an intense and devoted lover of his art and admirable comedian, Samuel Phelps, assisted by his loyal partner Tom Greenwood, founded what may be fairly called a colony of playgoers in the north of London, without ostentation or fuss. These playgoers of old Sadler's Wells were earnest and enthusiastic to a man. They smoked their pipes at the Myddelton Arms, or they played rackets in the open court at the Belvedere on Pentonville Hill, but they went to the play, and, they worshipped Shakespeare and the old dramatists. With fair but never ultra expensive scenery or dresses, with a first-class stock company of trained and experienced actors and actresses, Samuel Phelps did quite as much for the upholding of the drama in his small stronghold in Islington as Macready, his old master, and Charles Kean, his brilliant kinsman in art, did elsewhere.

An actor manager, who on his own stage at Sadler's Wells produced on successive evenings every play by Shakespeare save one or two, surely deserves some recognition; whilst, in addition to this, he dived deep into the classical drama, and never failed to encourage such authors as Robert Browning, Talfourd, Westland Marston, Frederick Guest Tomlins and the epic-loving John Abraham Heraud, the dramatic critic of the *Athenæum* and *Illustrated London News*, who was the subject of

one of Douglas Jerrold's most biting retorts. Heraud had written a lengthy epic called "The Descent into Hell." "Have you read my 'Descent into Hell?'" asked Heraud of Jerrold. "No!" snapped Douglas Jerrold, "but I should like to see it!"

Douglas Jerrold must have been without an equal in this kind of savage irony when his temper was ruffled by his constant disputes with his arch enemy Charles Kean. An affected, boasting fellow, one whom the modern school would call a "bounder," once said in the presence of Douglas Jerrold (said by Shirley Brooks to Sam Warren), "Would you believe it? I was dining the other day at the Duke of Devonshire's, and we actually had no fish for dinner." "Of course not," snarled Jerrold, "they ate it all *upstairs*."

I have often wondered how it was that from my earliest childhood I was, so to speak, inoculated with a love for the drama. I was not exactly stage struck, for I never had any desire whatever to be an actor, or even to go behind the curtain. Still I had my imagination fevered with the fancy, the terror, the humour, and the romance that passed before one on the stage.

I must have been a strange, rather silent, introspective and thoughtful boy. Very early in life I was sent to a day school in Theberton Street, Islington, close by Cloudesley Square. It was kept by a celebrated character, one George Darnell, a hopelessly lame pedagogue, called "Humpy" by the boys. Darnell had, with the aid of his writing master, William Smith, whose little daughter was my first love, invented a series of copy and exercise books, which I believe exist to this day.

I hated my life at this terrible Islington school. The head master frightened me to death, and I regarded him, rightly or wrongly, as some awful ogre. The boys

were as a rule uncongenial ; they were rank Puritans, and chaffed me for being a "Puseyite" because my father, a moderate High Churchman, was opposed to the pronounced Calvinism of Daniel Wilson, the Vicar of Islington, and, to add injury to insult, these young Islington Evangelicals stole my favourite marbles. My only happy moments were with the kind-hearted French master, M. Voquelin, who seemed to lead a lonely life, and naturally with sweet little Annie Smith, who comforted, caressed and prepared warm tea in the school-room, on cold mornings, for the sad-faced quiet little lad.

In order to get rid of the paralysing horror of that school, to which I trudged day after day, past "Dodd's Dust Heap," which terrified me to distraction with its army of hideous women dressed in hats and coats like men, sifting the rags and bones, I must have used every mental artifice. This same Henry Dodd was immortalised by Charles Dickens in "The Golden Dustman." He was a man of enormous wealth, who dabbled in theatrical matters, and originally intended to found or to give a site for the fatal Dramatic College at Woking, but backed out of it at the last moment, to the disgust of Charles Kean and Webster and all those who first favoured this ridiculous scheme, that proved so discreditable a failure. It was mainly supported by an annual Dramatic College Fête and Fancy Fair at the Crystal Palace, where actors of the foremost rank turned themselves into mountebanks, banging drums, squeaking through trumpets, and recalling the worst days of Bartlemy Fair at Smithfield ; while actresses of the highest position wrote love letters for a sovereign ; presented the shoes off their feet for a cheque ; and sold kissed strawberries at a guinea apiece.

So away I went to school every dismal morning, along Eagle Wharf Road, over the Britannia Bridge, across the Shepherdess Fields, that had long ago lost their Arcadian simplicity, and were being built over by Mr. Rydon, a great speculator. In order to counteract the distastefulness of the dustmen and dustwomen, and the grimy artisans at the engineering works, who swarmed round my favourite apple and gingerbeer stall, and the city clerks who rushed past me helter skelter to their banks and offices, I turned my attention to the gaily coloured posters on the wall, and tried to imagine what the plays could be about, at the Grecian and Britannia Saloons, and as far away as Nelson Lee's City of London Theatre.

These theatrical pictures, so gaudily displayed in all their glory, were my joy and delight, and I longed for the time when some one would give me a tip so that I could steal away and see for the first time a real play on a real stage. In fact, thanks mainly to these bright theatrical pictures, I invented for myself a silent game of imagination, which became a positive mania with me. In order to change the blackness, the dullness and despair of my miserable life, from the moment I closed the door behind my home in the New North Road, to the instant I put my hand on the latch of that beastly school door that led into the playground where "Humpty" with his two sticks in his shiny black alpaca coat would be glaring in a corner and waiting to put me on to construe Ovid or do some dreadful sum, I literally made belief I was somewhere else, where I was happy all day and knew no wretchedness. This was my self-invented game of imagination!

Now I was at Upton Grey, near Basingstoke, where my father took the summer duty of an old clergyman,

Mr. Rookin, close by the home of the Sclater Booths. I visited the scene only the other day, a scene "lost to sight, to memory dear" since I was four years old. It all came back to me. The lovely village on the hill, the house of the Sclaters—now Lord Basing at Hoddington—the Rectory House and the quaint primitive church, with a farmhouse outside the churchyard, where sleeps my father's old college chum, Parson Rookin. Now I was at Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire, where I was taken care of by a kindly, generous maiden aunt, and in absolute solitude spent the happiest of years in old world flower gardens, in the fields and meadows of Passenham and Castlethorpe, and amongst old-fashioned folk that I loved and who loved me. I must have passed very much the same sort of existence as young David Copperfield, except that I never ran away from anywhere, though I should dearly have liked to play truant from that hateful school.

Sometimes I carried the game of imagination back home with me, and when I saw a convenient opportunity, I sneaked into my father's study, and if the coast was clear, got hold of *The Times* newspaper, and literally revelled in all the theatrical advertisements "under the clock," studying by heart the titles of the plays, and imagining what the plots might be and what the actors and actresses must be like in their fine clothes.

Possibly, living as I did in the very heart of northern theatrical and tea-garden London, within sound not only of Bow Bells but those of St. Mary's, Islington, I was unconsciously affected by the theatrical atmosphere. A very few years before I was born, Hoxton was described as a quiet neighbourhood. There were fields in those days between the Angel at Islington and the Eagle in the City Road. Pentonville Hill, where in the little

churchyard—now a children's playground—Grimaldi, the famous clown, and Dibdin, the equally famous song writer, were buried, sloped away to Highgate, further north. "It was as fresh as the month of May."

"Up and down the City Road, in and out the 'Eagle,'  
That's the way the money goes, pop goes the weasel!"

This was the refrain of a once popular song, and as the Grecian Saloon attached to the huge tavern known as the Eagle happened to be in my father's parish, I ought to know something about the history of it, and its changes and vicissitudes from the days of Thomas or "Bravo Rouse" to those of Benjamin and George Conquest—father and son—and so on until the site was purchased for the religious purposes of the Salvation Army.

I know very well that at all our Christmas and other entertainments which took place in what was called the "National Schoolroom," long before the days of Board Schools, when the children of the parish were educated for a penny a week, we always selected "Mrs. Conquest's pupils" as partners in the dance, as that excellent lady possessed a ballet school; and a first rate one it was, for the delightful Kate Vaughan was educated there as a child. Indeed it was conducted on much the same principle as that of the modern Katti Lanner.

In the year 1834, when the popular tea-gardens known as the Shepherd and Shepherdess existed just off what was then called the New Road—now the City Road—in a rustic lane leading away over the Regent's Canal, the celebrated "Bravo Rouse" opened the Eagle Tavern, and commenced a career of remarkable theatrical enterprise. On his staff in 1834 were Miss Tunstall, a ballad singer, next to Mrs. Waylett supposed to be the

finest vocalist of her time ; Harry Howell, a comic singer and actor, "with the voice of Adam Leffler and the humour of John Reeve," said to be inimitable in "The Factotum"; Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Raymond, of the Strand Theatre, one of the most amusing and original actresses I have ever seen, a veritable low comedian in petticoats ; Mr. and Mrs. Caulfield, renowned in later days at the Haymarket, the parents of another pretty woman and charming singer, Miss Lennox Gray ; Harry Boleno, the pantomimist, and for years the celebrated Drury Lane clown, who made his first appearance at the Eagle ; Deulin, well known as a dancer ; Flexmore, the clown and dancer who succeeded M. Pepita at Her Majesty's Theatre in the ballet, and afterwards did so much for the success of Charles Kean's pantomimes at the Princess's, for clowns were inventors and actors in those days ; and Milano, the dancer, harlequin, and ballet master, who is doubtless remembered by many of the present generation.

It was in 1838 that the Eagle was rebuilt by Rouse, and called the Grecian Saloon. I have before me a hand-bill, dated 1838, which runs as follows :—

*"Royal Eagle Coronation Pleasure Grounds and  
Grecian Saloon, City Road.*

"Proprietor, Mr. T. Rouse. Unrivalled galas, with brilliant fireworks and splendid illuminations, and a series of superior amusements every Monday and Wednesday. To attempt a description of the numerous and varied sources of entertainment at this unrivalled establishment would be vain. Concerts in the open air, dancing and vaudeville in the saloon, set paintings, cosmoramas, fountains, grottoes, elegant buildings, arcades, colonnades, grounds, statuary, singing, music to render it a

fairy scene of which a due estimation can only be formed by inspection. Open every evening. On Thursday a benefit for the Laudable Pension Society, Bethnal Green (see bills). The whole under the direction of Mr. Raymond. Brilliant discharge of fireworks by the inimitable British artist, Mr. Brock. A band will play during the evening. Admission, 2s. Doors open 5 p.m."

Thomas Rouse, who was wise in his generation, and passionately fond of music, had copied the example of Madame Vestris at the Olympic as regards the better interior adornment of theatres, and the sumptuous furnishing of the stage; for, believe me, it is erroneous to suppose that theatres were all barns, and the stages deserts before the early sixties.

It is the fashion to-day to treat Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews as mere names. But they were the first to adorn and properly furnish the stage in modern and fantastic plays. In comedies like "London Assurance," the stage became like a dwelling-room, nature and reality were first observed, whilst the extravaganzas of Planché at the Lyceum were marvels of scenic effect.

Rouse's Saloon contained a church organ, a grand and self-acting piano, and seats with ledges in front—for refreshments, consisting of pies, bread and cheese and such like solid delicacies, were provided for the first time; it held about 700 people.

In 1839 a great addition was made to the company by the appearance of Robert Glindon, who wrote and sang songs for the Saloon; amongst the most popular were "The Literary Dustman," and "Biddy the Basket-woman." Also in the same year there came to the Grecian two artists destined to become very celebrated.



One was Frederic Robson, the other Johnson—known later on as Sims Reeves. Robson came from the Standard in Shoreditch. It is said, but it is doubtful, that his first part at the Grecian was "Lump" in the "Wags of Windsor." Sims Reeves acted in the same farce; he also sang at the *al fresco* concerts, and took the character of Charles to Robson's Wormwood in the "Lottery Ticket."

Again the same year ballet was introduced on a grand scale, hence in after years Mrs. Conquest's pupils; the organ was abolished, and an orchestra stand was put in its stead. Indefatigable still in his earnest desire to encourage the best possible music, Rouse, between 1840 and 1842, produced in succession some twenty operas by Bellini, Auber, Rossini, Adams, Boiledieu, Donizetti, and Balfe—the dear old "Bohemian Girl" of course! Here John Barnett conducted his "Mountain Sylph," and nearly all the famous Leclercq family appeared here, with the exception of the admirable actress whose death we have so lately mourned, Miss Rose Leclercq.

The turning point in the fortune of the Grecian was, however, the new Act of Parliament, Victoria 6 and 7, cap. 68; and after that Rouse was allowed to do, comparatively speaking, what he liked in the way of amusement and entertainment.

The "great little Robson" took his departure from the Grecian Saloon in 1849, having been engaged by old Farren for the Olympic, where he appeared in 1853 as "Mr. Robson," the celebrated actor from the Theatre Royal, Dublin, and was succeeded there as first low comedian by that friend of everybody and enemy of none—Johnny Toole.

"Bravo Rouse" retired on the 21st of March 1851, and after him came Benjamin Conquest, the father of



*Photo by* [Adolphe Beau.  
ROBSON AND HORACE WIGAN.



*Photo by* [W. Keith.  
GEO. BELMORE ("The Deal Boatman.")



*Photos by* ROBSON.  
("Chimney Corner")



FECHTER AND W. LACY. [Adolphe Beau.  
(In "Ruy Blas.")



George Conquest, the clever and versatile pantomimist, author, scene painter, stage director, and actor, who might fairly be said to have been born on the stage, and who certainly educated Harry Pettitt, Paul Meritt, and many more in the art of writing plays that would prove popular, and, as the phrase goes, had "money in them." Fads and cranks and visionaries and problem-weavers are all very well, and are interesting to many to-day; but in the early forties and to this hour the English original plays and the French adapted plays that succeed and delight the most, are those that are human, exciting, wholesome, and pure.

I shall have on several occasions presently to mention the name of Frederic Robson, one of those rare examples of genius that has shone out like a star on the stage of my time. I shall therefore say nothing here about his extraordinary art and power, developed later at the Olympic Theatre, of which he became the lessee with Emden. But as so many erroneous stories have been told of this exceptionally gifted man I may be permitted to quote here what I assume to be the true facts of the case, derived from a very rare little pamphlet called "Robson," by George Augustus Sala. Apart from his mimetic talent the career of Robson was particularly interesting to Sala, in that they both started life as engraver's apprentices. Robson became the greatest actor; and Sala the greatest journalist of their time.

This is what Sala says of Robson's early career :

"Not far from the Strand, and near that seedy paradise for players and stage professionals, Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, is situated an odd little cluster of courts, alleys, holes and corners, known as Bedfordbury. Properly this name only applies to the narrow

thoroughfare which leads through the heart of the district, from New Street to Chandos Street.

"This miniature rookery has the usual wonderful shops—wonderful for the strange goods they sell—wonderful for the strange old people who sit inside the doors like so many human spiders—and doubly wonderful by reason of their keeping open without the least appearance of doing any business.

"There are key shops, with thousands of rusty old keys, some curiously and, indeed, handsomely designed ; furniture shops, with the strangest old tables and chairs ; 'sweet-stuff' shops, with the farthing and halfpenny literature hung on strings in the window panes ; a herb shop, where a snuffy old man, surrounded by preserved tapeworms and stomach-wolves, sells his stalks and roots for the cure of all human ills.

"Well, in the centre of this little community is a little square—not exactly a square, because the paved area is three times as long as it is broad, besides being crooked at both ends, (but this was the way they built their squares formerly)—well, in this square, in 1836, and when he was fifteen years old, one Thomas Robson Brownbill, a little boy from Margate, was apprenticed to Mr. Smellie, the copperplate engraver, and well known printer of Mr. George Cruickshank's humorous plates.

"Master Brownbill's friends had found him crazy after the stage, as other urchins sometimes are after a sea life. Various professions, less romantic but conceive to be more respectable, were mentioned to him ; but, with the exception of the graver's art, he would not listen to any one of them. This he thought he might like, so his mother resolved to try him. The lad soon became an immense favourite with his master and the workmen, and they familiarly nicknamed him 'Bill,'

'Little Bill,' a sort of jocose shortening of his surname, Brownbill—for he was not known as Robson until some years later, when he adopted a Christian name as his theatrical title, adding *Frédéric*, which he considered decidedly stylish and quite out of the common,—a custom, not very unusual, I believe, with other ladies and gentlemen of his profession. I met one of the workmen the day after his death, and told him of his old comrade's departure. 'What. Little Bill gone!' he said. 'Ah! he was a merry lad, but he had better by half 'a stuck to the bench.'

'Little Bill' soon began to exhibit his theatrical tastes to the workmen, and his powers of mimicry kept the establishment from morn until night in a continual state of good humour. If a knife grinder or other travelling oddity entered the court, Bill buttoned up his coat, cocked his hat, and bawled an imitation until the tears ran down the men's faces with laughter. The apprentice always dressed showily, and usually had his hair artistically curled in ringlets. His hat was an extra size with a twisted brim, and as he wore this somewhat jauntily set upon a rather large sized head, the vulgar boys of the court used to call him the 'little big head.'

"Alas for the uncertainties of parental authority! Although the days were occupied over the graver, the nights were almost as regularly spent on the two or three amateur stages which were then to be met with in this neighbourhood; and the costume we have just mentioned, and the ringlets, were simply the effects of the mind's bent, and the evening's recreation. The youth, however, never shirked work for play; and his master used to say that there was not a man or boy in his shop who was so regular in the morning's attendance as 'little Brownbill.' At this time he lived with his

mother—his father had been dead many years—in Henry Street, Vauxhall, so that he had some distance to walk daily.

“He was bound for seven years, but only stopped four with his master. An unforeseen circumstance happening, the now skilful engraver and amateur theatrical found himself at nineteen out of his time, and his own master. Whether it was a promise made to his mother, or that he feared to rely entirely on the stage for a livelihood, we do not know ; but certain it is that immediately upon obtaining his liberty he did not go and enlist, without more ado, in the dramatic corps of one of the London theatres. In his old apprenticeship days, he used to say he would do so directly an opportunity offered itself ; but this was probably one of those little threats with which sanguine young people are apt to thoughtlessly alarm their fidgetty elders. His master gave up his business in the old court, and removed to Scotland ; and the amateur theatrical, finding himself free, very wisely conceived that a little business might be formed out of the old customers that Mr. Smellie had abandoned. Mr. Robson Brownbill now took a shop in Brydges Street, Covent Garden ; and here he carried on business as a master engraver for twelve months. During the whole of this time he continued to take part in amateur performances, and a favourite song, both with himself and his audiences, was ‘Lord Lovel,’ generally sung in character. Finally, one morning, his neighbours in Brydges Street observed, by a piece of paper attached to the shutters of Mr. Brownbill’s shop, that business had been relinquished. The engraver had taken home his tools to keep as curiosities, and had accepted the offer of a country manager. From that time to the present he has been

before a public—one at first small and provincial, but latterly large and metropolitan—as Frederic Robson.

"I have just said that he kept his tools when he gave up his business. He used to say to an old friend that he never looked at or handled them without pleasant reminiscences of those early apprentice days passed in the quaint little Bedfordbury square—days unalloyed by the cares of managerial life or mental dejection.

"These, reader, are our recollections of the apprentice days of this wonderful little man. Since his decease, a carefully written summary of the principal events in his career has been prepared by one who knew him very well when living."

This short biography (the fullest which has yet appeared) is here given to the reader as a prologue to the descriptive "Sketch" of Mr. Sala:

"The death of Mr. F. Robson, at the comparatively early age of forty-three, though not altogether unexpected by those who knew his physical condition, is a sad event to chronicle. He died on Friday, the 12th inst., after a long and complicated illness, which ended in dropsy. His medical adviser—Dr. Fergusson—had given him up several weeks ago, and his family were, therefore, not unprepared for his decease.

"His career as an actor has been very short, but very remarkable. He was born at Margate, in 1821, and at one time threatened to become one of those unnatural productions—an 'infant prodigy.' When very young, he had several opportunities of seeing Edmund Kean before the last time that great actor appeared upon the stage in 1833. He caught the most striking mannerisms of the tragedian, and succeeded in reproducing them with far more than the average skill of a precocious child with dramatic instincts.



"His first efforts as an actor may be said to have been made as an infant imitator of Edmund Kean. His friends appear to have striven to wean him from the stage by apprenticing him to a copperplate engraver in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden; but the intensely theatrical atmosphere of the district revived his youthful ambition. Like many more great actors, he paid to make a first appearance, and was kindly told that he had 'mistaken his vocation.' The once famous amateur theatre in Catharine Street, Strand, was the scene of his first real trial performance, when he played Simon Mealbag in the domestic drama of 'Grace Huntley.'

"Undaunted by many adverse opinions passed upon his raw acting, he persisted in doing what he felt he could do, and accepted an engagement to act in a room as 'second utility' in the old oyster town of Whitstable, in Kent. His position here was not as good as that of a nameless stroller whom I lately saw playing Robert Macaire in a booth on the beach of that very town, but still he liked the place and often passed a day or two there when he took a holiday. His theatrical apprenticeship at Whitstable was not lost time, for he acquired, amongst other things, that thorough command of the Kentish dialect which he afterwards made so effective at the Olympic in characters like 'Daddy Hardacre and the old man in 'The Porter's Knot.'

"From Whitstable he went to many other small places, appeared at Uxbridge, got as far as Glasgow, and from there came to London, where he acted for a very short time at the City of London Theatre. Early in 1844 he accepted an engagement at the Grecian Saloon Theatre, in the City Road, appearing in the funny old farce of the 'Illustrious Stranger.'

"His success (I happened to be present at his first performance) was immediate and complete. The Grecian Theatre at this time was under the management of its founder, Mr. T. Rouse—a man who did more than any other manager to improve the representation of the drama at the minor theatres. The place was a 'saloon'—that is to say, drinking and smoking went on during the performance; but the pieces put upon the stage were all of a high class, and the scenery and appointments would not have disgraced the Olympic during the brilliant reign of Vestris and Planché. The light operas of Boieldieu, Adolpho Adam, Auber, and others, were very creditably given, with principal singers like the late Mr. Frazer, of Covent Garden, and a tolerable band and chorus. The admission fees were low, the place was comfortably and even luxuriously fitted up, the entertainments were on the most liberal scale, and the proprietor sat every night in a box in full view of the audience, keeping order with as much dignity as the Speaker of the House of Commons.

"At this saloon theatre, Mr. Robson remained for more than five years, playing many of those characters, such as 'Wandering Minstrel,' 'Boots at the Swan,' &c., which he afterwards rendered famous at the Olympic. His peculiar and original tragi-comic vein was often shown, though not in burlesque properly so called; and as the place retained some of the features of the old tavern 'sing-song,' from which it sprang, he was often called upon to exercise his genius as a comic singer. After the plays were over in the theatre, a 'miscellaneous concert' was given in one of the large saloons attached to the grounds, and here 'Willikins' and the 'Country Fair'—which afterwards kept two farces alive at the Olympic for nearly a twelvemonth—

were often heard between eleven o'clock and midnight.

"When Mr. Robson left the Grecian Theatre in 1850 it was to accept a more lucrative engagement which had been shrewdly offered him by Mr. Henry Webb (the chief of the two 'Brothers Dromio'), who was then the lessee of the Queen's Theatre, Dublin. Mr. Robson played with great success at Dublin and Belfast for two or three years, until a misunderstanding arose between him and his audience. While acting in a drunken scene he pronounced a particular word in such a way that it sounded like 'priest,' and this was taken as a studied insult to the Roman Catholics.

"Something like a riot ensued. The next day a meeting was called by the manager, and explanations were given to delegates from the audience; but, though Mr. Robson was allowed to appear again, he was coldly received, and acted with evident nervousness. He left for London soon after, and his place was taken by Mr. Toole."

I have often heard E. L. Blanchard say that Rouse was originally a bricklayer, and took a very practical share in the erection of his property. He invariably occupied a very prominent private box, and on his nightly appearance was saluted by friends and admirers with cries of "Bravo Rouse," a compliment which he acknowledged with the dignity of a monarch, and the pomposity of a proprietor. On one occasion he fell asleep in his box, and on waking up, called out in imperial tones that the performance must be instantly stopped, as he had been robbed of his watch and chain. However, the next minute he found the missing time-piece on the floor, and, rising with great deliberation and pomp, intimated that the performance might be resumed.

Strange to say, almost exactly the same thing occurred many years after in Paris, when John Ryder, an excellent actor, was with others trying to make the Parisians interested in Shakespearean plays. But the consequences on this occasion might have been far more serious. John Ryder, who had studied under Macready and Charles Kean, was one of the old school, and not remarkable for the choiceness of his language or the elegance of his vocabulary. In fact at times he could be very violent and emphatic, both on and off the stage. One night after the play he was supping with "the boys" at, we will say, the Café du Helder. Suddenly a scowl came over his face, he felt in his pockets and imagined he had lost his purse.

John Ryder did not know a word of French, but this circumstance did not mitigate the ferocity of his English. In stentorian tones he roared out, "These infernal frogs of foreigners have robbed me. Shut the —— door. Don't let any of the —— thieves escape. Let them all be searched." There was naturally an uproar and a hubbub in the place, all the men and women began whispering and gesticulating as the English tragedian thundered out his expletives. Then once more Ryder's expression changed, a bland smile overspread his countenance. He had put his hand into another pocket and found his purse. All he could yell out was, "Pardon, pardon ! I have found the —— bauble !"

Between eight and nine one evening in 1841, as E. L. Blanchard has often told me, on one of our innumerable Christmas expeditions to the Grecian in the days of the Conquests, when on cold nights old Benjamin in the inn parlour would treat us to "rummers of old brown brandy," the eager and expectant author was pacing anxiously between the Canal Bridge and the old Eagle

in the City Road. Blanchard was to receive the opinion of "Bravo Rouse's" dramatic reader on the libretto of an opera called "Arcadia, or the Shepherd and Shepherdess," suggested no doubt by the Merrie Islington and Hoxton neighbourhood.

If favourable, Mr. Rouse's company and conductor would arrange the music. Half an hour later, E. L. B. was in the seventh heaven of delight. The reader accepted the book, and Blanchard was the richer by a five-pound note ; for dramatic authors were not so well paid in those days, I can assure you. The dramatic reader turned out to be none other than Jonas Levy, a playgoer from boyhood, and the intimate friend in after years of John Oxenford, Frederick Guest Tomlins, Bayle Bernard, Joe Langford, Sterling Coyne, with whom I was associated on the dramatic critics' bench in my very early days, and in whose company I journeyed often to Sadler's Wells and the northern theatres of London.

Jonas Levy, who was the owner of the beautiful Kingsgate Castle between Margate and Broadstairs, was a barrister, a newspaper proprietor, having a share in *Lloyd's*, for which he wrote dramatic criticisms, and chairman of railway and other companies. He had in his chambers in Gray's Inn one of the finest theatrical libraries I ever saw, which was at once my envy and delight. In it were the MSS bequeathed to him by "Bravo Rouse."

One more old Grecian memory. As the Angel was celebrated for its "white rum," so was the Grecian for a favourite drink called "capillaire" ; but the fascinating syrup had run out before my time. I only heard of it from my seniors, who to my mind were naturally oracles in the art of tasting plays and other good things.

Close by our house in 1841 was the Albert Saloon. It was situated, as most of these saloons were, in tea-gardens, and in a rustic lane, the Shepherdess Walk in the Britannia Fields. The place was remarkable as having two stages built at right angles to one another, the proscenium of one opening into the gardens for summer use, and the proscenium of the other to the actual saloon for winter or wet weather. This is a plan I have advocated for years past without effect. I have seen it adopted again and again on the Continent; and some such place for winter and summer amusements with first-class music would on the Embankment be a godsend to all London. I wish the London County Council would turn its attention to an Embankment Music Hall of the first class, instead of a rate-aided opera.

The theory always is that we have no climate for these places. But surely they can be so arranged as to suit the most variable changes of weather. It is strange, however, to discover that what we have been asking for continually for years past in modern London, existed at the Albert Saloon, Hoxton, in 1841. The proprietor was a Mr. H. Brading, and he had in his company Paul Herring, afterwards a very famous pantomimist and clown; and Edward Edwards, who first made popular such celebrated Porte St. Martin dramas as "The Tower of Nesle," a fine play with a magnificent part, that of Buridan, but an awkward plot to get over. Edwards was well known for his brilliant performance of Triboulet in "The King's Fool," one of the many versions of Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse," called on the operatic stage "Rigoletto."

Paul Herring's real name was Bill Smith. For years he travelled with Richardson's show as an "all round man." When the property came into the hands of

Nelson Lee—who had formerly been a Harlequin—and Johnson, the former discovered Bill's talent, re-christened him, and made him a famous London clown.

When Paul Herring was just recovering from typhoid fever in St. Thomas's Hospital, he faintly asked a nurse to give him something to drink.

"Certainly, Sir," she answered, and on the instant tendered him a glass of fresh filtered water. He put up his hand most feebly, and said, in a gin-and-fog tone of voice, "If you please, good sister, give it me in a saltspoon until I get used to it."

I have always thought that Edwin Booth's performance in "The Fool's Revenge" was the very finest thing he did in London. Why Irving never attempted it I know not. With his superb performance of Louis the Eleventh in my mind, I think it would have suited his style admirably, exhibiting as it does cunning, craft, mischief and passion. The balloon ascents from the Albert Saloon by the celebrated aeronaut Mr. Green were very popular. The place closed in 1857, and I believe a part of the site is now occupied by the "Royal Standard" public-house.

In connection with the name of Brading and the old Albert Saloon I recently received a letter from a friend, who said :

"I came across Mr. Henry Brading the other day presiding at a snug little bar in the Eagle Wharf Road, Hoxton. His father was the Mr. Brading of the Albert Saloon, and he himself in 1841 ascended with Mr. Green, the aeronaut, in his balloon, 'Albion,' as one of the day's attractions. He told me he used often to sing a comic song to help out the programme. His father was not very successful, and died at the early age of forty-nine. Mr. and Mrs. Lane—both ever full of

good nature—called to see their friend before he died, and Sam Lane said, 'Ah! Brading, you are to be pitied. You had a bad manager and I had a good one. That's all the difference.' The son is now seventy-five, hale and hearty, and regrets that he gave away his collection of playbills connected with the Albert Saloon a few years ago. Where are these playbills now?"

Closer even to my home than the Albert Saloon were the North Pole Gardens. In 1841 there was an old roadside inn standing in the New North Road; to this pleasant tea-gardens were attached, which stretched away to the Regent's Canal on the south. But, dear me, how primitive it all was! There was a turnpike gate in the City Road, close by the Vinegar Yard, opposite St. Luke's Lunatic Asylum; and another in the New North Road, through which we had to pass and pay before we got to the Bank of England; and under the great wall of Sarson's Vinegar Yard, there stood for years, innumerable hucksters' stalls, at some of which they sold Catnach Ballads on flimsy sheets of paper, ballads descriptive of the latest murder or the most sensational *cause célèbre*.

I doubt not that Mr. and Mrs. Manning and the murdered Custom House gauger O'Connor were immortalised in Vinegar Yard. Mrs. Manning, the prime mover in the murder of O'Connor, was hanged in a black satin gown, and after this event that particular material went out of fashion for some time. All the ladies shuddered at it because Mrs. Manning was hanged in black satin.

Edmund Yates always made us laugh with his description of the Manning murder. O'Connor was the lover of Mrs. Manning, and the guilty married couple invited the unfortunate young man to supper. When



he had washed his hands preparatory to the meal, Mrs. Manning, as he descended to the kitchen, fired point blank at him with a pistol, and, as sportsmen would say, "winged him." At the trial, Manning, commenting on the scene, was said to have observed, "I never liked the fellow, so I finished him off with a ripping chisel." They buried poor O'Connor that night after supper under the kitchen hearthstone. A cute detective some few days later kicked over the hearthrug and discovered that the mortar had been newly laid. Up came the stone, and behold the murdered O'Connor, lying stiff and stark! Exit the Mannings, at Newgate, black satin gown and all. Their odious countenances may be seen to this day in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's.

Johnny Toole, who began life as a clerk in a wine merchant's office in the City, knew the murdered O'Connor well, and has often told me he was a charming fellow. But, unluckily for him, he fell under the spell of Mrs. Manning—murderess. Many charming young fellows have probably followed in the footsteps of the ill-fated O'Connor, and had to pay heavy penalties accordingly.

The advertised attractions of the North Pole Gardens included a bowling-green and a good dry skittle-alley. It was naturally a favourite resort for the humble London citizen of the early forties, and for young couples who loved it, as some of the youngsters of to-day are attracted by the last of the old tea-gardens at Pegwell Bay. This is a feature of old London now quite dead.

I can well remember the time when in the long strips of gardens leading from the house to the road, that may be seen in the Euston Road to-day, the whole length of the way from the Angel, Islington,

to the Yorkshire Stingo at Marylebone, there were drinking arbours, and old waggoners' inns provided with horse troughs and signs standing in the roadway:—the last relics of country days. You can see the road gardens along the Euston Road and Marylebone Road—once called the New Road—to this day, and possibly an occasional swinging sign and horse trough exactly similar to the one in which Sam Weller's father ducked the immortal Stiggins.

A London pioneer in the art of amusing people in an honest fashion, quite as celebrated in his way as Bravo Rouse or Ben Conquest, was Mr. S. Lane, of the Britannia Saloon, Hoxton, the husband of Mrs. Sara Lane, until her lamented death on the 16th of last August, the manageress and proprietress of one of the oldest theatres in London, renowned for her generosity, her tact, her unostentatious methods, her boundless charity, and her systematic desire to present to the people of her beloved Hoxton the best possible entertainment at the cheapest possible prices.

In the Elizabethan age the site upon which the Britannia stands was occupied by the once noted hostelry and garden named the Pimlico (hence Pimlico Walk), and under that name is spoken of by "rare Ben Jonson" and Dodsley as the resort of the wonderful poets and players of the period, which, no doubt, included the Swan of Avon, and prince of dramatists, the immortal Shakespeare. After Ben Jonson's time it became noted for the tea-gardens that adjoined the house, although remarkable for little else until Easter Monday, 1841, when Mr. S. Lane determined to rival the then flourishing Grecian and Albert Saloons, and took the place then known as the Britannia Tavern. At the back of this tavern was a large stretch

of ground, which Mr. Lane utilised by erecting on it a spacious saloon, and opened it according to the following advertisement :—

“ Royal Britannia Saloon.—Britannia Tavern, Hoxton. Licensed pursuant to Act of Parliament. Proprietor, Mr. S. Lane. Open every evening, with splendid decorations à la Watteau (by Mr. Fenhouli, of the Theatre Royal). Variety Entertainment—Talented Company—Grand Concert—Opera and Vaudeville—Rope and other Dancing—Ballet—Laughable Farce. Neither talent nor expense is spared. Price, reserved seats 6*d.*, and upper stalls 1*s.*, for which a refreshment ticket is given. Doors open at six o'clock, commence at half-past. Chorus master, Mr. Rudford; ballet master, Mr. Smithers; leader of the band, Mr. Jackman; machinist, Mr. Rowe.”

The “Brit.” went on swimmingly until licensing day again came round. The saloons were then licensed by the magistrates, and there was a Mr. Mac Something or other on the Bench. He didn’t approve of amusements himself, and did all in his power to deprive hundreds of others who happened to think differently from himself,—of rational pleasure, in fact, he was the Bogey man of all entertainment caterers.

Accordingly by his influence the Britannia license was refused; so Mr. Lane had to go home and think what he could do with a property which had cost him thousands and was the support of a colony of hard workers. The dramatic company was disbanded, and had to seek “fresh woods and pastures new.” Mr. Lane’s spirit of enterprise, however, would not permit him to grin and bear, so he got together a concert company and gave a vocal entertainment, without instrumental accompaniment, and admitted the public free. A floorer for Bogey!

In due time licensing day came round again, and this time Mr. Lane met with better success, his license was granted, and from that hour the Britannia Saloon started on a career of ever increasing success. Its name soon became a household word far and wide, and especially in the North of London; sound melodrama was produced and effectively performed, some of the leading actors of the day being engaged, as the following list will show.

In 1846 were engaged Thomas Swinbourne, C. J. Bird, W. Rogers, T. Fredericks, Sam Sawford, F. Wilton, H. Carles, Mrs. Atkinson, and Miss Marion Lacey; in 1849, Messrs. N. T. Hicks and Lysander Thompson; in 1850, Mrs. Yarnold. After nine years of management Mr. Lane found the existing premises quite inadequate to accommodate the audiences, and, with characteristic energy, he, in 1850, made considerable alterations and enlargements, without closing a single night! In this year were engaged Mdlle. Celeste Stephan and Mr. and Mrs. Newham, who were destined long to be associated with the establishment.

In 1851 Mr. Charles Rice appeared (afterwards proprietor of Covent Garden and Bradford Theatres), and also the late lamented Joseph Reynolds, the talented actor and genial friend, who for thirty-six years worthily upheld the fame of this establishment—an engagement unprecedented in the profession. To prove what marvellous strides the theatre has made in the favour of the public it will be sufficient to mention the engagement in 1851 of Mr. James Anderson, the famed tragedian, at a salary of £120 per week. To this success none contributed more than Mrs. S. Lane (previous to her marriage well known to fame as Miss Wilton), who in pantomime, comedy and drama, proved herself equally at home.

In 1852 appeared the great coloured tragedian, Mr. Aldridge ; Mr. W. R. Crawford in 1853 ; Miss Clara St. Casse, 1854 ; and Jean Louis, the popular clown (for sixteen pantomimes), in the same year. In 1855 were engaged the great Mackney, and the clever actor Hudson Kirby ; and in 1856, Mr. John Parry and Miss Sarah Thorne.

Again Mr. Lane found that his spirited management made the demand for seats exceed the supply, and again he determined to enlarge his premises ; but this time he resolved to pull down the ancient building and to erect an entirely new theatre. Thus the old Saloon closed its doors for ever on the 29th of June, 1858. By a very extensive purchase of adjoining cottages Mr. Lane acquired a large increase of ground, upon which he built the present colossal theatre, which was opened to the public on the 8th of November, 1858. Mr. Sam Lane was a noted yachtsman, and for many years a member of the Royal Thames Yacht Club. He won over fifty races with his yacht *The Phantom*. Mr. Howard Paul was engaged in 1859, and Mr. T. Drummond 1860 ; Sam Collins (afterwards the music-hall proprietor) appeared in 1861, and the great Leotard engaged at an enormous salary in the same year.

In 1862 the monster circus of Van Hare appeared upon the stage, which was altered to an arena. In this year Mr. G. B. Bigwood first made his appearance ; and here also appeared the great pugilist Tom Sayers ; in 1863, Miss Sophie Miles, and Tom King, the pugilist ; 1864, Master Percy Roselle, and the *Alabama* crew ; 1865, Stead the Cure ; 1868, Marie Henderson ; 1869, Fred Foster ; 1870, Miss Edith Sandford ; 1871, Miss M. Bellair, and Lulu, the sensational aerial performer.

On the 28th of December, 1871, Mr. S. Lane died, and

Mrs. S. Lane carried on the management after his death with the spirit, energy, and good taste which has ever characterised the establishment. In 1840 or 1841 Mrs. Lane, *née* Borrow, was a singing and dancing star at the Apollo Saloon, Old Street, St. Luke's, under the name of Wilton. All concert rooms in those days were called Saloons; then they became Music Halls; now they are Variety Theatres. In 1872 appeared Miss Lily McDonald, the Rizaros Bros., clever trapeze artists; also Mr. G. H. Macdermott and Mr. E. Newbound made their first appearance on these boards. In August, 1872, died Mr. W. Borrow (Mrs. Lane's father), to whose untiring zeal as acting manager must in a great measure be attributed the success of the theatre, as he had been associated with the establishment from its earliest days. In 1873 appeared J. B. Johnson, the champion swimmer; the Tichborne Claimant (soon to be incarcerated in Dartmoor prison); Romah, the sensation trapeze artist, and the marvellous Boisset Dixon Troupe. At Christmas, 1874, Miss Polly Randall made her first bow to this audience.

In 1875 there appeared Miss Bertha Adams; and the same year saw the retirement of the venerable stage manager, Mr. F. Wilton, after thirty-four years' service, who recently died in Australia at a patriarchal age; in 1877 the Phoites were engaged, and in 1878 Mr. T. Lovell first appeared here as a clown. The engagements of note in 1882 were Mr. W. Steadman, and Myers' troupe of elephants and lions; in 1883, Marian the Giantess; in 1884, Mr. Algernon Syms; in 1885, Little Jumbo.

The last few years of the history of the theatre have been principally notable for the elaborate and careful production of West-End plays, notably, in 1883, "The

Romany Rye"; 1884, "Storm Beaten"; 1885, "A Sailor and his Lass"; 1886, "Hoodman Blind," "Lights o' London"; 1887, "The World," "The Noble Vagabond," "In the Ranks," and "The Silver King." In 1888, "Harbour Lights," "Ben my Chree," "Shadows of a Great City"; 1889, "Monk's Room," "Captain Swift," "Bells of Haslemere," "Golden Ladder," "Silver Falls," "Hands across the Sea," "Joseph's Sweetheart"; 1890, "Nowadays," "A Man's Shadow," "Sophia," "London Day by Day," and "Master and Man."

I must not forget to say that the reputation of the theatre to-day stands higher than ever for its merry and gorgeous pantomimes, the first of which was produced Christmas, 1841. In point of managerial duration this theatre stands alone, no theatre in Great Britain having been under one management for such a term as fifty years. On Easter Monday, 1891, the full term of fifty years expired since first Mr. Lane hit upon the idea of turning an obscure tavern into a popular and spacious theatre.

Concerning the *Britannia*, Mr. Johnny Gideon sends me some most interesting notes.

"The pantomime at the *Britannia*, 'Abon Hassan, or the Sleeper of Bagdad,' produced on Boxing night, 1861, was a disastrous failure; and during the first week of January following, I made an engagement for Tom Sayers—then in his zenith—to appear as clown—and a most melancholy one he was—for twenty pounds a week. For this stipend were thrown in, his assistant, Jack Reeve, and Tom's two educated mules 'Barney' and 'Pete.' The engagement was a terrific success. He filled the house from floor to ceiling nightly, until the last week in March, and so saved the pantomime.

But, only fancy ! such a drawing card to-day would get twenty-five pounds a night, and not so small a pittance as he did, that of three pounds six shillings and eightpence. Verily, theatrical agency was not my métier !

"Mr. and Mrs. Billy Newham were over thirty years members of the Britannia company. They were the parents of the lady known as the head of the Colonna troupe of Can-can kickers, and whose show at the music halls was stopped by the police.

"They were also the parents of the Newham now and for years at the music halls, a knock-about comique with Latimer.

"S. Bigwood, the stage-manager at the Britannia, has been a member of the company thirty-five years or more.

"Such things as a 'call boy' or 'green room' at the Britannia are unknown. Yet go when you will, a 'stage wait' never occurs. The benefit terms to the company, are, after the first ten pounds have been taken, either by cash or tickets at the doors, to share all other receipts with the management."

Notwithstanding all that the fanatical and Puritanical faction of London may say, the "dear old Brit." has played a very important part in the crusade for "free trade in amusements"; and by its entertainments, dramas, examples of heroism, pluck, bravery, and unselfishness has helped in a remarkable way to humanise the sad-hearted people "down East." The year 1898-1899 saw a record Britannia Pantomime as it ran from Christmas until one week before Easter, or thirteen weeks in all ! Think of it, 1841 to 1891, the Jubilee, and now triumphing still at the close of the



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century ! Think of the peals of laughter that have echoed through this memorable playhouse, of the women's tears that have been shed, and the men's hearts that have been touched within the walls of the " Brit." for close on sixty years !

We were born together, the Britannia Saloon and I !

## CHAPTER III

### “THE EARLY FORTIES”—PLAYS AND ACTORS

THERE is, as I have before humbly suggested, such a decided tendency in modern criticism and with amateurs generally, to believe, and, having once believed, to definitely state, that the art of playwriting and acting was only discovered in this country along with the first nugget of gold that arrived from Klondyke, that it may be well to glance at, at least, these two before-mentioned plays, that have survived the ups and downs of sixty years, that are still stage classics, and, when well acted, are as attractive now as when they were first written.

I shall be very much surprised if the so-called “epoch-making” “Second Mrs. Tanqueray,” or any of her sisters, cousins or aunts, will ever attain the long life, honour and fame, that have been awarded to at least two plays written by men who had no particular fads or views, who understood the stage and its requirements, who had studied the art of acting, and who best of all “held the mirror up to nature.”

But this is merely an opinion. I cannot discount fate. Still I should like to back “Sweet Lavender” against “Mrs. Tanqueray” and “The Gay Lord Quex,” as I should like to back Charles Dickens against Ibsen.

I allude of course to Bulwer Lytton’s “Money,” pro-

duced in 1840; and Dion Boucicault's "London Assurance," in 1841.

Luckily I have secured a few criticisms on the original performers in both of these well-known plays, from those who were present at the first representation: one, from Walter Lacy, one of the principal actors in "Money," who played Sir Frederick Blount, and dressed the part admirably; the other, from the author himself of "London Assurance"—Dion Bourcicault—with an extra "r"—as he was then called, having abandoned his *nom de plume* of Lee Moreton.

It is the fashion of the day to pooh-pooh the stage work of Bulwer Lyttón; to call it old, tawdry, fustian, tricky, and so on. I do not myself think it would be considered so if we had another Charles Fechter with us now to play the much-despised Claude Melnotte; a Samuel Phelps or an Edwin Booth to enact Cardinal Richelieu, or one of the famous Bancroft casts for "Money."

When a once popular old play is badly acted, when young actors who do not understand it or are incapable of appreciating it, kick at it like mules, then we are solemnly told that the play is bad, and not the actors. Believe me it is not so. Neither Shakespeare, nor Sheridan, nor Goldsmith, nor Boucicault, nor Robertson, are ever bad except when badly acted. Then they can one and all be made to look and sound very bad indeed—even to the verge of bathos. The public are so simple: the power of the actor sways them like a magnet; they seldom think of the author, only the actor: when he fails, the author is ridiculed as over-rated or old-fashioned, or incompetent, and is hissed and boo-hoed accordingly.

It does not necessarily follow that because Henry Irving with his weird personality made no very great

success as Romeo and as Claude Melnotte; or because his power was found wanting when he attempted the Curse of Rome as Richelieu, and tore a passionate and dramatic page to tatters; or because he was not an ideal Othello—albeit he has been proudly crowned as "the greatest actor of the century," that our forefathers were wrong to be thrilled by a Macready or a Helen Faucit, or that the playgoers of to-day would not be thrilled again were the opportunities of seeing equally fine acting granted to them.

Such a title as "the greatest actor of the century" is, as schoolboys would say, a "tall order," and I am certain it would be resented by no one more than the great artist himself, who is certainly "one" of the great actors of the century. There is no need to deal in superlatives, for there have been very great actors in this century, and actresses also, when all is said and done.

Of course I have not seen John Kemble as Penraddock; or Charles Kemble as Benedick, Faulconbridge, or Mercutio; or Edmund Kean as Richard, or Sir Giles Overreach; or William Charles Macready in any character, old or modern; or Forrest or George Frederic Cooke, or the elder Booth. But I have seen Samuel Phelps as Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, Sir Peter Teazle, Job Thornberry and Bottom the Weaver; and Charles Kean as Louis the Eleventh, Sir Walter Amyott in "The Wife's Secret," and Mr. Ford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"; and Charles Fechter as Ruy Blas, Iago, and Obenreizer; and Robson as Daddy Hardacre, and in "The Porter's Knot"; and old Farren in "Grandfather Whitehead"; and Jefferson as Rip van Winkle; and Edwin Booth as Bertuccio in "The Fowl's Revenge"; and Salvini as Othello and the Gladiator; and John S. Clarke as Tyke and Acres; and Sarah Bernhardt

in "Hernani," "Fedora," "Adrienne Lecouvreur" and "La Tosca," and Aimée Desclée in "Frou Frou" and "La Maison Neuve"; and the incomparable Bressant and Delannay in "Mlle. de Belle Isle," and "On ne badine pas avec l'Amour," and Charles Dillon as Belphegor, and Wilson Barrett in "The Silver King," and Lafont in "Le Centenaire," and David James in "Tweedie's Rights," and countless fine performances in every part of the world—and, having seen them, I venture to dispute the statement, that, great and interesting as many of our living actors may be, they are not greater in degree than those I have casually mentioned.

It will not do to shift the ground, and say that the "Lyceum Knight," as he is loyally called, is the greatest stage manager who ever existed; for, strange as it may seem to the amateur of to-day, the art of scenic and stage management is not one of the wonderful discoveries of the last few years of the fading century.

Madame Vestris was among the first to put the stage in order, to introduce natural interiors and exteriors, to furnish rooms elaborately, and plan gardens in a less artificial manner. Old playgoers are never weary of telling us what Madame Vestris did at the Olympic and Covent Garden Theatres, and of certain remarkable revivals of "As You Like It" and "Acis and Galatea." I have myself witnessed before the forties had disappeared, Planché's extravaganzas at the Lyceum in which Madame Vestris appeared. "The King of the Peacocks," "The Island of Jewels," "King Charming," and so on. Later I feasted my eyes on the archæological splendours designed by Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre, "The Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Winter's Tale," "Richard the Second," and many more magnificent productions, that helped to ruin a true



I. L. TOOLE. [Bunch & Bousley. Photo by] LIONEL BROUGH. [W. Keith.  
(Dinorah under "difficulties.")



Photo by] (Adolphe Beau.  
WALTER LACY.



Photo by] [W. Walker & Sons.  
HARRY MONTAGUE.



enthusiast, who did not hesitate to beggar himself for the art he loved and so splendidly served.

Dion Boucicault's "Basil and Bigon," costly and extravagant no doubt, was not such a very bad production after all. It is true that as soon as the Vestris period was over there was another relapse into dreary squalor and brainless untidiness. Benjamin Webster and Buckstone and Chatterton and George Vining no doubt meant well; but they scrambled their plays on to the stage anyhow, and preferred the cheap theatrical rag-bag to the artistic costumier and the milliner. Amongst these "penny plain and two-pence coloured" managements with starved stages, only Miss Herbert at the St. James's, a lady of exquisite taste, and Henry Neville at the Olympic could at one time hold their own.

Chatterton certainly made a splash with "Manfred," but I never myself cared much for any of his Shakespearean or other productions; and there was a very good and sufficient reason for Charles Lamb Kenney's oft-quoted epigram that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy." In fact it was a deplorable period of dramatic art, when scenery was as a rule execrable, dresses tawdry and shabby, and W. S. Gilbert in his first flush of youthful cynicism satirised the "Adelphi moon" and the "Adelphi guests." And oh! the wigs, the gowns, the beards, and the shoes, and the ludicrous attempts to depict the French or any other nation on the stage! But this winter of discontent happily did not last very long.

The artistic Bancrofts came along with their new views and their pronounced taste, and gave to the then modern stage a fresh lease of life, adding luxury and nature to the stage pictures, and insisting that the



actors and actresses should be properly and accurately dressed. To my utter astonishment the other day I saw an allusion made to the "old dust-hole known as the Prince of Wales's Theatre under the Bancrofts!" Oh dear no! It was the Bancrofts who removed the dust-hole and all the dust with it, and erected on the cleaned-out empty bin one of the prettiest bijou playhouses that London had at that time ever seen.

The Lyceum Era of Henry Irving is without a doubt one of the most praiseworthy features of the dramatic century. He, like Charles Kean, was "all for art!" He spent money as lavishly as his predecessor did for his mistress art, and he, with wonderful instinct, utilised every modern appliance in the way of lighting, except in front of the house, and textile fabrics and designs. The age in which he lived greatly favoured him, and he nobly used his best gifts; but, for all that, he had rival candidates for praise and homage in Macready, Phelps and Charles Kean; and no candid person reviewing the dramatic art in all its bearings during the last half century or so could or would dispute the fact.

The Irving Era has been a grand one for the stage, in some respects perhaps the grandest in achievement; but if history is to be written, do not let us forget William Charles Macready and Charles Kean.

Now let us get back to Bulwer Lytton's "Money," which, as I have already said, is as good and workman-like a stage play now as when it was produced in 1840, and, if brilliantly cast, would be equally interesting. With a Lady Bancroft, a Mrs. John Wood, or a Mrs. Kendal for Lady Franklin; a George Honey, John S. Clarke, or Arthur Cecil for Graves; a John Hare for Stingy Jack; an Archer for Dudley Smooth; a David James for Stout; a Bancroft or Kendal for Sir Frederick

Blount ; a Montague, a Coghlan or Forbes Robertson for Alfred Evelyn ; a Gertrude Kingston for Georgina Vesey ; and a Lydia Foote, Kate Rorke, or Lena Ashwell for Clara Douglas,—there would not, unless I am grievously mistaken, be many spare seats at the Haymarket Theatre to-day if "Money" were performed. But then I am, and ever have been, opposed to the modern pessimistic theory that a popular play is *ipso facto* a bad one, and therefore to be discouraged as unliterary or something of the kind. I love to hear the people laugh over a good comedy.

In the year 1880 I asked my old friend Walter Lacy, who was in the original cast of "Money" when it was first performed at the Haymarket on the 8th of December, 1840, forty years before, to favour me with a few recollections of the old play. He sent me, from the "Old Ship," Brighton, dated Twelfth Night, 1880, the following interesting and historic letter :—

" 'THE OLD SHIP,'  
"Twelfth Night, 1880.

"MY DEAR EDITOR,—Your note calling for a couple of pages of recollections of the original production of 'Money' at the Haymarket, found me in the company of 'merry Doctor Brighton,' as Thackeray calls my old and familiar friend, doing the *dolce far niente*. This occupation Macready's staunch friend Forster seemed to consider my special *métier* ; for in his criticisms on 'Money,' speaking of my Sir Frederick Blount, of which more anon, he says : 'Mr. Walter Lacy had nothing to do, and he did it to perfection ;' and now, forty years after that critique was written, I am sitting serenely in the well-known bay-window, where, figuratively speaking, you may catch the spray of the sea among your prawns.

"You are right, my dear friend, when you say that a question of great moment to the classic ground of comedy lies in the changing hands of the Prince of Wales's and the Haymarket, both famous—one from the début in England of the prince of French comedians, Frédéric Lemaître, and the other from the days of Foote, the home of English comedy, and both peculiarly interesting to an old stager like myself, who first appeared as a poor player in the Tottenham Street Theatre, called at that time the Queen's, as the stage lover of the gazelle-eyed Celeste when she fascinated the town as the French Spy, and, after some years of severe provincial practice, making a début at the Haymarket as Charles Surface to the Lady Teazle who brightened my professional career and shed a radiance round my domestic hearth.

"Consequently I imagine that any incident or detail connected with either theatre that may come to memory, although unassisted by such books and playbills as repose out of my present reach in my modest library in London, might possibly prove of some slight interest before the witchery of Marie Wilton withdraws its light from the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, and the golden wand of her spouse, Squire Bancroft, transforms the faded stage of the Old Haymarket into a temple full of modern appliances and means to boot.

"Some half a century ago the Tottenham Street Theatre, let me tell you, was fashionably upholstered, and the act-drop painted by Clarkson Stanfield, a copy of which, or one very similar, enriches the walls of the Garrick Club. The stage was adorned by Mrs. Nesbitt, Mrs. Waylett, gentleman Green, and handsome Forrester; and I remember Madame Vestris and her Olympic Company playing there, and others of great

note. 'The Wandering Minstrel' was produced there, with Mitchell as the hero, under the Mayhew management, when it was called the Fitzroy; after which it fell into the hands of Mr. James, who kept it open for many years at low prices, until the magic name of Marie Wilton restored it to more than its pristine glory, and made it the most fashionable theatre in London.

"My acquaintance with the Theatre Royal Haymarket commenced when Thalia reigned there in all her glory, and the comedies of Shakespeare, Goldsmith, and Sheridan were performed by a matchless company, with due regard to costume and scenery. The ladies in 'The Rivals' were brought into the Kingsmead Fields in sedan chairs; the comedian of unrivalled sparkle, Tyrone Power, playing Sir Lucius. We were no longer in the Haymarket, but in Bath, at its most fashionable period; Brindal, the best impudent valet, as Fag, meeting Mrs. Humby, the peerless lady's-maid, as Lucy, on the North Parade.

"'The School for Scandal' was played in 1839, in the costume of the period, cast thus: Sir Peter, Farren; Sir Oliver, Strickland; Sir Benjamin, Wrench; Crabtree, Buckstone; Joseph, John Cooper; Charles, Walter Lacy; Moses, Webster; Snake, O'Smith; and Trip, Brindal; Lady Teazle, Mrs. Walter Lacy; Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Clifford; Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Glover; and Maria, Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

"In 1840 the modern comedy of 'Money' was produced, in which I played for the first thirty nights, being the last five weeks of my three years' engagement at the Haymarket. The piece was got up regardless of cost, Count D'Orsay suggesting the costumes; and, as Charles Mathews, with the elegant spider figure, had

educated the public in the matter of perfect dressing, we were naturally anxious to show to the best possible advantage. The count's tailor made my clothes, which comprised a complete change for each of the five acts, absorbing as many weeks of my salary.

"The cast was nervously considered; and James Wallack, having declined Dudley Smooth, it was given to Wrench, whose sang-froid and society air suited the part admirably. At the first rehearsal Macready evidently thought I was too slow; but I saw that the best chance for the author and myself lay in opposing a *laissez-aller* manner in Blount to the irrepressible temper of Macready in Evelyn. However, after an ominous consultation with his friend Forster, the part was taken from me, and John Webster sent for; but it was immediately brought back to me by Wilmot, with 'Macready says John Webster's too fat,' and I was left to deal with it after my own fashion, which was fortunate for myself and Sir Edward, who came to me on the stage the morning after the comedy had been submitted to the public, and thanked me 'for a creation.'

"At the same time, from Mr. Frederick Yates, the *Lemaître* of the English stage, I received an offer of Mr. Wrench's enviable position, couched thus: 'Dear Sir,—If you will come to the Adelphi, I promise that for every sentimental hero you shall have a regular rattling Wrencher as a set-off.' But Mr. Charles Mathews, who witnessed the performance with Mr. Yates, gave such a favourable account of it to Madame Vestris, that I was invited to the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, where my wife was then playing Titania in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

"So I opened there the following season as Captain

Absolute ; meanwhile I was not sorry to be out of harness, in order to enjoy a spell of my *doice far niente*, and, after a comfortable domestic dinner with my dear wife before she attired her delicate form for the Fairy Queen, I was able to enjoy the comedy of 'Money,' which is always made so much fuss about from the auditorium of the Real people.

"The ladies, God bless them ! played enchantingly. The poetic grace and melodious rhythm of Helen Faucit contrasted charmingly with the piquant naturalness of Priscilla Horton. The queenly Mrs. Glover, a marvellous specimen of the '*ars est celare artem*,' was delightful as Lady Franklin, and bewitching in the dancing duologue with Webster, whose Graves was brimful of quaint drollery and sharp appreciation of the humorous situation, the actress subjecting him to her quivering eyelids, and winning him, with the softness of a summer wave, to the wish that mutually gleamed in their expressive faces, until the audience sympathising heartily applauded the fun.

"Macready's Alfred Evelyn was amazingly bright and telling, the forced gaiety being as natural to the man as appropriate to the character.

"The actor, however, who made the heartiest impression was David Rees, who combined a Listonian gravity with the raciness of John Reeve. He burst on the stage with an avalanche of cravat, shirt front, and white waistcoat covering his capacious chest, forcibly reminding me of Beau Brummell's fine linen, plenty of it, and country washing. There was a breezy freshness about the man, his great round red face luminous, full of breath and explosive power ; he rushed in like an express engine, puffing with electioneering excitement, and seeming to expand until he filled the whole atmosphere. He shot

out the words, 'Popkins for Groginhole!' over the crowded pit, as from a hustings, in a way that electrified the audience.

"With this my connection ceased with the old comedy theatre; but Bulwer's comedy of 'Money' was played every night until Saturday, March 13, 1841, when eighty representations were completed. I played there four parts afterwards on special occasions, viz. Benedict and Don Felix to the Beatrice and Violante of charming Miss Reynolds, Lord Tinsel to my dear wife's Helen, and Alfred Highflyer to Mrs. John Wood's Maria, at the command of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Mr. Buckstone, on assuming the management, sent me a laconic note: 'Dear Walter Lacy,—Are you in the market? If so, you shall not be long out of the Haymarket.' I was engaged, probably, at the Princess's. My last reminiscence of 'Money' was one of my most agreeable successes as Dudley Smooth at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane—'the man about town' being well within my *métier* on and off the stage.

"By-the-way, no doubt you are aware that candles were used to light the Haymarket Theatre so late as the year 1842, the terms of the then lease forbidding the use of gas. What a change in the Haymarket of to-day, with its brilliant appearance and Italian mosaics! *Tempora mutantur!*

"WALTER LACY."

At the same time I received another very valuable communication from the veteran Haymarket actor Henry Howe, whose name was associated with this theatre for forty years and four months, when he migrated to the Lyceum camp, under the management of his attached friend and benefactor Henry Irving.

"January 12th, 1880.

"DEAR EDITOR,—I hardly know how to comply with your request, except by way of a little chat on the subject of the old theatre. When I first joined the Haymarket company, the house was lighted with oil behind the curtain, and in front with wax candles; that plan continued for six or seven years in my time before gas was introduced.

"The performance commenced at seven o'clock, and for years half-price to the pit and boxes was at nine o'clock, an arrangement strictly adhered to as to time, the public being admitted often in the middle of a scene; afterwards half-price was altered to the end of the act nearest to the hour of nine, the performances always lasting up to twelve o'clock.

"On occasions I have been acting at one in the morning; and frequently in July I have seen day breaking before I could get to my lodgings. Osbaldiston made his first appearance at the Haymarket in 'Clari,' a three-act piece, at ten minutes to twelve o'clock. I well remember once playing the farce of 'John Jones,' in a Boxing Night bill of 1846, finishing the following morning at past one o'clock, and getting through the piece in twelve minutes. It was on the first night of the production of 'The Invisible Prince,' one of the most charming of Mr. Planché's burlesques, which had been preceded by the two-act piece called 'The Round of Wrong,' by Bayle Bernard, and the two-act piece of 'The Queenboro' Fête,' by Planché.

"We have often played two five-act comedies on one night, 'The School for Scandal' and 'Wild Oats,' 'Clandestine Marriage' and 'The School of Reform,' &c.

"It was the custom to change the bill every night, and it was the office of the walking gentleman of the



theatre to announce to the audience the programme of the following night, which sometimes, from illness or unforeseen circumstances, could not be carried out. I remember once having myself announced 'The Way of the World' for the next night, there being no rehearsals at the time, and on my coming up to the theatre at night from Isleworth, where I lived then, to play in the announced piece, I found 'The Clandestine Marriage' in the bill; but the actors were always expected to be perfect in a certain number of comedies, and ready to play them.

"I had a list of some ten or a dozen given me when I first went to the Haymarket, to be ready in case of being wanted. Rehearsals were always called early, frequently at ten o'clock—never later than eleven—but seldom prolonged over two o'clock. The system of rehearsals was entirely different then to now. The stage-manager never drilled individuals as to the positive action of a part; he would explain the purport of the character or scene, and then you were left. As my first stage-manager, Mr. James Wallack, then expressed it, 'You must paint your own picture.' This is perhaps to be explained by the assumption that every artist engaged at the Haymarket was thoroughly proficient in his profession, proved by his antecedents elsewhere.

"It was the etiquette of the time, if any artist, not acting on that night, paid a visit to the green-room of his theatre, to come in full dress, as he would to any friend's drawing-room. There was also a distinct understanding that no newspaper criticism should be brought into the green-room.

"When I reflect and dot down the names of the artists engaged at the commencement of Mr. Webster's management, I can scarcely credit my own recollections,

for I mention the names with whom I joined an already very full company playing there at the time.

"You will understand this when I state that Mr. Macready, Mr. Phelps, Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Warner, Miss P. Horton, and Mr. Howe appeared on the Monday following the closing of Covent Garden Theatre, under Mr. Macready's management; so that these additions made a company which could cast out four, and in some instances five, artists in every line of business, for each artist's line was so defined that at the reading of a new piece each individual could tell what part was allotted to him before the characters were given out.

"These under-written names belonged to the company at the same time. Leading men: Mr. Macready, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Elton, Mr. James, Mr. Wallack. Leading ladies: Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Nisbett, Miss Fortescue, Mrs. Warner. Old men: Mr. Farren, sen., Mr. Strickland, Mr. Tilbury, Mr. E. F. Matthews. Old women: Mrs. Glover, Mrs. W. Clifford, Mrs. Stanley. Comedians: Mr. Fred Vining, Mr. Lacy, Mr. Brindal, Mr. Holl, Mr. Howe, Mr. Hemming, and the great Tyrone Power, Irish comedian, Mr. W. Lacy, Mr. Webster himself, Mr. Wrench, Mrs. Humby, Miss P. Horton, Mrs. Stirling, Miss Julia Bennett, Madame Celeste, with a host of lesser celebrities.

"So distinctly has the Haymarket been the home of comedy, that even with such aid in tragedy as the names I have given, the comedy nights had the greatest houses. I remember in the case of Mr. Macready, whose salary was £25 per night for four nights a week, that Mr. Webster only played him two nights, although paying for four, devoting the others to the representation of comedy.

"In the summer we have played five pieces a night,

two-act comedies and farces ; this has gone on for weeks, generally when Power was with us. A very successful piece scarcely ever ran more than thirty nights. The first play that had a run longer than that under Webster's management was 'The Love Chase,' and I have heard him say that it did not pay expenses till the twenty-third night. The next great success was Shakespeare's 'Taming of the Shrew,' got up as when originally produced, that is without scenery. The whole proscenium was a rich crimson velvet hanging, with velvet curtains opening in the centre, on which, as the different scenes progressed, a card was pinned on to the inner curtain, which opened in the centre, through which all the entrances and exits were made, 'This is a street in Padua,' 'This is Petruchio's house,' &c., &c. The novelty was great, and drew good houses.

"I have heard Webster say, a Mr. David Rees from Dublin Theatre Royal, drew him as much money personally as any one he ever engaged—an admirable actor of old men and low comedy, the original Stout in 'Money' ; but he was not long in the theatre, his death being a great loss to Mr. Webster. The elder Farren's Grandfather Whitehead was another monetary success. I went into the house to witness it on several occasions ; but so great was the effect upon me by Mr. Farren's extraordinary pathos, I could not see it without the fear of making my emotion the subject of observation, so that I never did see the piece to the conclusion. The first entire London company that ever went the round of the provinces was the Haymarket company ; it was a very profitable and remunerative undertaking, and was continued every vacation during Webster's management. When Mr. Buckstone became manager of the Haymarket, he took the company on speculation, and realised large

profits. To show how certainly it was a great success, on one occasion Mr. Buckstone having given up his tour one week before we opened in London, we stayed on our own responsibility for five nights at Bradford in Yorkshire, and the receipts of those five nights paid every soul engaged at the rate of nineteen nights—that is, paid the same amount of money each would have received for three weeks and one extra night at the rate of our regular salaries.

"At the termination of the management of Mr. Webster, who seceded to the Adelphi, a supper and ball were given at the theatre, including both companies. Mr. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, after their Covent Garden management, brought great houses to see the original production of 'Used Up,' &c. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, on their return, from America after their marriage, found a second engagement was not a success, until the Palace plays were done at Windsor Castle; that restored their attraction for a time, as Charles Kean had the management of them; but I have heard Webster say the worst receipt he ever had at the Haymarket was from 'Much Ado About Nothing,' in which Mr. and Mrs. Kean acted.

"Mr. Buckstone's first great success was little Blanche Fane, who drew large houses for months in 'Little Treasure,' &c.; next, 'The Spanish Dancers,' to great houses; 'Unequal Match,' with Amy Sedgwick, and 'Contested Election,' by Tom Taylor; and of course, in your own recollection, Sothorn in 'Dundreary,' Gilbert's 'Palace of Truth' and 'Pygmalion and Galatea' were attractions, and brought a great deal of money. I remember seeing at the Haymarket, before I was on the stage, the elder Farren play Shylock for his benefit; it was a failure, and the next night Mrs. Glover as Falstaff,

also a great failure, for although the most unctuous of famine comedians, she seemed like a wealthy youth playing the part.

"Mr. Buckstone made a large sum of money during the run of 'Dundreary' at the time of the second Exhibition; but the long vacations while we were in the country greatly injured the theatre; and the great increase of theatres, some of which paid much more attention to the getting up of the old comedies than we did, added to its decay. Webster was the lessee for eighteen years, Buckstone for twenty-three, who was an actor in the Haymarket some six or seven years before Webster's management, Mr. and Mrs. Kean, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, and, as you know, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, Mrs. Fitzwilliam the elder, and Miss Reynolds, were great Haymarket favourites.

"Now I think I have run over the principal incidents I can recall; I have written as I remembered.

"Believe me, always yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. HOWE."

In this valuable letter from my old friend, a subject is touched upon which is of great interest to-day. I mean the difficulty that modern managers experience in getting actors and actresses of position to "play the people in," and "play them out." There was no such difficulty in the early forties. My esteemed friend "Johnny Gideon," who is a mine of old theatrical lore, has unearthed for me a wonderful playbill of the 13th of March, 1840, which is well worth reproducing, not only to show what was being done at Covent Garden under the management of Madame Vestris, but the loyalty of her company in assisting her to make up an attractive programme.



*Photos by* LOUISE KEELEY.



BOB KEELEY. *[Adolphe Bea*



*Photo by*

MR. AND MRS. KEELEY.

*[Adolphe Bea*

"Whose little man are you?"

"My dear, I am your little man."



# THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN

Under the Management of Madame Tattler

Last House of Miss Emma Tattler's Pantomime Entertainment

This Evening, Friday, March 12th, 1840, will be performed (45th Time)  
a New Original Play, in Five Acts, written by Sheridan Knowles,  
called

## LOVE

The Scenery by Mr. Grove, Mr. T. Grove, and Mr. W. Grove.

The Decorations by Mr. W. Bradwell. The Dresses by Mr. Head and Mrs. Stroud.

<i>Date of Confinement</i>			Mr. Cooper
<i>Prince Frederick of Prussia</i>			Mr. Selby
<i>Count Ulrich</i>			Mr. Diddar
<i>Sir Rupert of Lerch</i>			Mr. J. Vining
<i>Sir Otto of Steinberg</i>	} Knights		Mr. Wigan
<i>Sir Conrad of Hohenfels</i>			Mr. Fitzjames
<i>Evon (a Serf)</i>			Mr. Anderson
<i>Stephen</i>			Mr. W. H. Payne
<i>Herald</i>	Mr. C. J. Smith	<i>Falconer</i>	Mr. Cillet
<i>Nicholas</i>			Mr. Ayliffe
<i>The Empress</i>			Mrs. Brougham
<i>The Countess of Byenstein (the Duke's Daughter)</i>			Miss Ellen Tree
(Being the Last Night of her present Engagement.)			
<i>Katherine (an enfranchised Serf)</i>			Madame Vestris
<i>Christina</i>	Miss Lee	<i>Bertha</i>	Mrs. Emden

To be followed by a Burletta, by Mr. Charles Mathews, entitled

## \*PATTER v. CLATTER.

*Captain Patter* . . . . . Mr. Charles Mathews.

With the Songs of "When a Man Travels, or A Guide to Paris,"  
"I Once Fell in Love," and "Reminiscences, or Things That Were  
Not."

<i>Mr. Pepper Parker</i>	Mr. Granby	<i>Percy Pouter</i>	Mr. Connell
<i>Peter Parker</i>	Mr. Kerridge	<i>Miss Patty Parker</i>	Miss Beresford
<i>Pierre Pytter</i>	Mr. Ireland	<i>Polly Pilfer</i>	Miss Jackson

To conclude with (20th Time) a Grand Allegorical and National Masque  
in honor of Her Majesty's Nuptials, entitled

## THE FORTUNATE ISLES:

### OR, THE TRIUMPHS OF BRITANNIA.

The Music composed and selected by H. R. Bishop, Mus. Bac. Oxon.

The Action entirely arranged by Mr. Oscar Byrne.

The Decorations and Appointments by Mr. W. Bradwell.

The Dresses by Mr. Head and Mrs. Stroud. The Machinery by Mr. H. Sloman.

<i>Jupiter</i>	Mr. W. Harrison	<i>Cupid</i>	Miss James
<i>Saturn, or Time</i>	Mr. Borani	<i>Hymen</i>	Miss R. Isaacs
<i>Mars</i>	Mr. Binge	<i>Juno</i>	Mrs. Osborne
<i>Neptune</i>	Mr. S. Jones	<i>Amphitrite</i>	Mrs. E. Knight
<i>Mercury</i>	Mr. Connell	<i>Minerva</i>	Mrs. Cummins
<i>Bacchus</i>	Mr. Granby	<i>Venus</i>	Miss Chariton
<i>Apollo</i>	Mr. Kerridge	<i>Diana</i>	Miss Lane
<i>Hercules</i>	Mr. S. Smith		



*The Nine Muses.*

<i>Melpomene</i> . . . . .	Mme. Simon.	<i>Polyhymnia</i> . . . . .	Miss Beresford.
<i>Thalia</i> . . . . .	Miss Charles.	<i>Erato</i> . . . . .	Miss Phillips.
<i>Calliope</i> . . . . .	Miss Ryalls.	<i>Terpsichore</i> . . . . .	Miss Kendal.
<i>Olio</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Brougham.	<i>Urania</i> . . . . .	Miss Fitzjames.
<i>Euterpe</i> . . . . .	Miss Lee.		
<i>Britannia</i> . . . . .			Miss Penley.
<i>Liberty</i> } The Guardian Spirits of <i>Britannia</i> . . . . .			{ Madame Vestris.
<i>Honour</i> }			{ Mr. Cooper.
<i>Fame</i> . . . . .	Miss Wilkinson.	<i>Victory</i> . . . . .	Miss Fairbrother.
<i>Geniuses of Saxony, Denmark, and Normandy</i> —Messrs. Ireland, C. J. Smith, and W. H. Payne.			
<i>Ate</i> (Goddess of Discord) . . . . .	Miss Rainforth.	<i>Arch Druid</i> . . . . .	Mr. Partridge.
<i>British Chiefs</i> . . . . .	Messrs. Honner, Ridgway, Gibson, Morelli, Gardner, Russell, &c.		
<i>British Priestesses</i> . . . . .	Mesdames Gibson, Hatton, Paris, A. Paris, Morgan, and Gardner.		
<i>Tritons, Genii, Knights, Morris Dancers, &amp;c.</i> —Messrs. Benedict, Brace, Butler, Chant, Charles, Davies, Healey, Ireland, Johnson, Kerridge, S. Smith.			
<i>Sea Nymphs, Peasantry, &amp;c.</i> —Mesdames Beresford, Baker, Charlton, Cum- mings, Jackson, A. Jackson, Butler, Lane, Bailey, Garrick, Collett, Goward, Wood.			
New Scenery by Mr. Grieve, Mr. T. Grieve, and Mr. W. Grieve.			

## PART I.—THE OCEAN.

“When Britain first at Heaven’s command  
Arose from out the azure main.”

Forest of Oak and Druidical Cromlech.

*Tableau Vivant.*

Runnymede—King John Signing Magna Charta.

<i>King John</i> . . . . .	Mr. Selby.
<i>Cardinal Pandulph</i> . . . . .	Mr. F. Matthews.
<i>Bishop of Ely</i> . . . . .	Mr. Ayliffe.
<i>Earls and Barons</i> —Messrs. Horton, Collett, Andrews, Hughes, Connell, Jones, &c.	<i>Robert Fitzwalter</i> . . . . . Mr. Fitzjames. <i>Earl of Clare</i> . . . . . Mr. Wigan.

The Palace of Chivalry.

Dedicated to the Military Triumphs of Britain.

<i>Edward the Third</i> . . . . .	Mr. Diddear.	<i>Henry the Fifth</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. Vining.
<i>Edward the Black Prince</i> . . . . .			Mr. Binge.

## PART II.—THE WEALD OF KENT.

“In the Golden Days of good Queen Bess.”

## PANORAMA.

TILBURY FORT, with Queen Elizabeth on Horseback reviewing the Troops.—  
GRAVESEND—THE RIVER—THE CHANNEL—Advance of Spanish Armada—  
Its Defeat and Dispersion.

Commemoration of the Naval Triumphs of Britain !

*Tableau Vivant.*

King Charles the Second Landing at Dover.

(From the Picture by West.)

<i>Charles the Second</i> . . . . .	Mr. Diddear.	<i>General Monk</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. Bland.
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Rising of the Star of Brunswick !  
(Designed and Executed by Mr. W. Bradwell.)  
Triumph of Peace and Love !

The Masque is published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, 186, Strand ; and may be had there or in the Theatre—Price 1s. The Music of the new Grand Allegorical Masque is published by Chappell and Co., New Bond Street.

TO-MORROW (15th time this Season) Sheridan's Comedy of THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL—*Sir Peter Teazle*, Mr. W. Farren ; *Sir Oliver Surface*, Mr. Bartley ; *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, Mr. Harley ; *Joseph Surface*, Mr. Cooper ; *Charles Surface*, Mr. Charles Mathews ; *Crabtree*, Mr. Meadows ; *Careless*, Mr. Fitzjames ; *Sir Harry*, Mr. Binge ; *Rowley*, Mr. Granby ; *Moses*, Mr. Keeley ; *Trip*, Mr. T. Green ; *Snake*, Mr. Selby ; *Lady Teazle*, Madame Vestris ; *Lady Sneerwell*, Mrs. Brougham ; *Mrs. Candour*, Mrs. Orger ; *Maria*, Miss Lee After which, the New Ballet Divertissement entitled LES CHAMPS ELYSEES—Principal Characters by Master W. Smith, Miss Fairbrother, Miss Ryals, Mrs. Gibson, Miss Kendal, Miss E. Kendal, Mr. C. J. Smith, Mr. Ridgway, Mr. Gibson. With CHAOS IS COME AGAIN—*Colonel Chaos*, Mr. Bartley ; *Jack Bunce*, Mr. Charles Mathews ; *Tottenham*, Mr. Meadows ; *Sam*, Mr. W. H. Payne ; *Harriet*, Miss Charles.

On MONDAY, will be revived Shakespeare's Tragedy of ROMEO AND JULIET. The Part of *Juliet* by Miss Jane Mordaunt (her First Appearance at this Theatre). With (46th Time) HARLEQUIN AND THE MERRIE DEVIL OF EDMONTON ; OR, THE GREAT BED OF WARE.

On TUESDAY, a Play of Shakespeare's. And (20th time) THE FORTUNATE ISLES ; OR, THE TRIUMPHS OF BRITANNIA.

ON WEDNESDAY (14th Time this Season) Sheridan's Comedy of THE RIVALS—*Sir Anthony Absolute*, Mr. W. Farren ; *Captain Absolute*, Mr. Anderson ; *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, Mr. Brougham ; *Faulkland*, Mr. Cooper ; *Acres*, Mr. Harley ; *Fay*, Mr. T. Green ; *David*, Mr. Keeley ; *Mrs. Malaprop*, Mrs. G. Jones ; *Lydia Languish*, Madame Vestris ; *Julia*, Mrs. Nisbett ; *Lucy*, Mrs. Humby.

On THURSDAY, will be revived Colley Cibber's Comedy of THE DOUBLE GALLANT. Period of the Play, 1707.

Sheridan Knowles's Play of "Love" will be repeated this evening, being the last night it can be performed until the return of Miss Ellen Tree from her Provincial Engagements.

The New Ballet Divertissement, entitled "Les Champs Elysées," will be repeated To-morrow.

The Grand Allegorical and National Masque, entitled "The Fortunate Isles ; or, The Triumphs of Britannia," will be repeated this Evening and Tuesday.

Sheridan's Comedy of "The School for Scandal" will be repeated to-morrow, and the Comedy of "The Rivals" on Wednesday next.

"Harlequin and the Merrie Devil of Edmonton" will be repeated on Monday next.

Dress Boxes, 7s., second price, 3s. 6d. ; First and Second Circles, 5s., second price, 2s. 6d. ; Pit, 3s., second price, 2s. ; Gallery, 1s. Doors to be opened at Half-past Six and the Performances to commence at Seven. Tickets and places for the Boxes to be taken at the Box-office from ten till four, where season tickets may be had on application. Private Boxes to be had solely of Mr. Andrews, Bookseller, 167, New Bond Street. [Vivat Regina.

But I will go a little further back still. On a hot summer night, July 3, 1833, the curtain went up at the Haymarket when the clock had struck eleven some minutes, on a farce by Charles Mathews, entitled "*My Wife's Mother*." It proved a great success, and during the first run it always "played them out" at the Haymarket. And what a cast! William Farren the elder, James Vining, Brindal, Eaton, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Honey, and Miss Taylor (afterwards Mrs. Walter Lacy).

And here is an instance of loyalty in the cause of art. Under Macready's management at Drury Lane Mrs. Warner—afterwards associated with Phelps at Sadler's Wells—played such parts as Emilia in *Othello*; Lady Macbeth; Constance in *King John*, and characters of that importance. Yet, when Macready produced and played "*Virginius*" with Helen Faucit as Virginia, Mrs. Warner was cast for the comparatively unimportant part of Serbia, the nurse of Virginia, and played it during the run of Sheridan Knowles's tragedy. I should like to see the face and hear the remarks of the modern actress of the status of Mrs. Warner if her manager asked her to play Virginia.

Under the same management Elton, always a star and leading man, was cast for Lorenzo in the "*Merchant of Venice*," and he played it cheerfully without loss of dignity. He was an artist.

It was the rule with Macready at Drury Lane and Charles Kean at the Princess's that no person was engaged for any specific line of business, in order that if any one refused a character in which he or she was cast, dismissal was the alternative. Planché in his Easter piece (March, 1853) for the Hay-

market, "Mr. Buckstone's Ascent of Mount Parnassus," said :

"Great people little parts do not refuse,  
The actors always mind their P's and Q's,  
The author's language you hear every word of.  
'Sudden indispositions' never heard of.  
All do their utmost—all is point devise,  
And we pay nothing—and don't mind the price."

There is one old Haymarket institution that I fear disappeared with the old oblong theatre, that was pulled down to make way for the Bancroft Palace, and the destruction for ever there of the time-honoured pit. Shall I ever forget the opening night, and the shrieks and howls and general disturbances, and Mr. Squire Bancroft's speech, and the contest between conservatism and commerce, and the thick, black awful fog afterwards, through which with the utmost difficulty I pioneered my brother dramatic critics to Fleet Street, each hanging on to the other's coat tails and hugging the accommodating wall for safety ?

The Haymarket institution to which I allude was known in the Buckstone Era as "The Court." My old and dear friend Walter Gordon—or Gowing—for very many years a Haymarket actor, having previously been at the Olympic in the days of Robson, and played the Wicked Son all through the run of the celebrated "Porter's Knot" (*Les Crochets du Père Martin*), thus describes the Haymarket "Court of no Conscience."

*"Saturday, May 4th, 1844.*

"The Court of No Conscience. Sitings during the Easter piece. Before Sir Robert Strickland, the Lord Chief Justice of Un-Common Pleas ; the Lord Chief Baron Buckstone. *Martin v. Brindal*. Serjeant Tilbury for the plaintiff ; Serjeant Holl for the defendant ;

Mr. Howe, foreman of the jury ; Mr. Planché attending as the representative of the press.

“ On this occasion the judges were robed, and sat in due state. This farce or extravaganza was being acted simultaneously with the performance on the stage ; and it would appear that fun, good humour, conviviality, and good fellowship were the coins placed beneath the foundation-stone of the institution which flourished through so many years.

“ The Court was composed of the members of the Haymarket company—in fact it was a club, and, like all clubs, ladies were not admitted to membership. It was held in the dressing-room over the green-room. A list of the members, neatly written, framed and glazed, hung on the wall ; and the names were arranged in the order of the respective birthday of each member. It was the duty of each member to provide a jug of punch on a Saturday night, as his turn came round, as also on his birthday. Marriages, or other happy events occurring to a member, were also causes for celebration among the brotherhood, and were invariably taxed by the Court with relentless severity.

“ The Court opened generally about half-past eight, or at the most convenient time to suit the Lord Chief Justice—that is to say, when he should have his first long wait in the comedy then being acted. An arm-chair was placed in the centre of the room, other chairs around a table, on which stood the smoking aromatic jug of punch. The members would assemble according to their opportunities. On the entrance of the Lord Chief Justice all rose and bowed to him, a glass of toddy was then handed to his lordship, and, if the occasion was special, the health of the member was proposed and drunk ; if it was only the usual Satur-

day night sitting, the toast consisted of 'Our noble selves.'

"The only fines in the Haymarket Theatre seem to have been those awarded by the Court. It would sometimes happen that a good-humoured report of some trifling matter would be laid before the judge, whereupon the delinquent would be put on trial, and always condemned—costs or damages, four shillings. This paid for whisky, lemon and sugar. There was no court of appeal against the sentence.

"There is one instance of a fine so comic in its nature that it may be worth recording. Mr. Buckstone had acted in the comedy. Mr. Compton was to act in the farce 'Shocking Events.' The two comedians met at the door of the café in the Haymarket, the one having finished his work, the other on his way to commence it. They entered into conversation as well as into the café, and Mr. Compton forgot that time would not wait for him. In the theatre the farce had commenced; all went merrily enough until the call-boy went to summon Mr. Compton. Oh! horror! it was discovered that he was not in the theatre. What was to done? Mr. Chippendale, acting in the farce, apologised to the audience, when in came Mr. Compton, and almost immediately he rushed upon the stage, and the piece went on to its end. Of course this formed the subject of a trial, and Mr. Compton brought a counter-charge, accusing Mr. Buckstone with having detained him; and that as manager Mr. Buckstone ought to have been aware that Mr. Compton was wanted. The plea was admitted, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Un-Common Pleas *fined himself*.

"When a comedy was running, and all the actors were busy in their parts, no birthday or special occasion

happening during the week, the Clerk of the Court, little Clark, would propose a 'whip'; this being collected, the punch was brewed, and Mr. Buckstone invited as a guest, an invitation he never refused, and at the same time he never forgot to return the compliment.

"The leading topics of the day were freely discussed—politics, theatricals, anecdotes and experiences of early life were told, sometimes re-told; but the humour of the telling was always a set-off against the antiquity of the story or joke. There were a few honorary members, personal friends of Mr. Buckstone; they had notice from the Clerk when their turn came to hold a Court, and they invariably attended. Latterly, the Court was held in the sitting-room of Mr. Buckstone's private house, adjoining the theatre, and communicating with the stage. Whether the Court of No Conscience will be re-opened with all its old formality and fun at the new Haymarket Theatre, I, of course, cannot possibly say; but I for one can look back with pleasure to the recollections, kindly faces, and genial companionship associated with this convivial institution.

"WALTER GORDON."

I once asked Bancroft why, when he became manager and proprietor of the Haymarket, he did not reinstate the "Court of No Conscience"? To which he laconically replied, "I don't approve of clubs in theatres. The actors are there to act and to work; they can amuse themselves afterwards when clear of the workshop." I am sure that Bancroft was right. Some of our so-called artists should be encouraged to work a little more and to play less.

Before I take leave of the old Haymarket, the notes

of another dear lost friend, J. Palgrave Simpson, when I was editor of *The Theatre*, may be found interesting, and also one or two extracts from Mr. E. Y. Lowne's invaluable "Macreadiana."

"Your request to me, Mr. Chairman, to lay before your circle any interesting reminiscences of the 'little theatre in the Haymarket' which I may find in my memory's wallet is, to my mind, a flattering privilege. But, unfortunately, rummage my wallet as I may, I can drag forth from its corners nothing which can be considered worthy of your attention in an historical point of view—nothing, certainly, which has not been better told by others, and, in every sense, far more deserving of important consideration.

"Although I was on several occasions connected with the Haymarket Theatre—I may mention three: the production of 'Ranelagh,' that of 'Second Love,' and that of 'World and Stage,' the first a much-altered adaptation of a French play, 'Un Mari qui se dérange,' the others two original comedies—my recollections are almost entirely personal, and, even as such, anecdotal. Of my principal exponents, Buckstone, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Compton are no more; William Farren and Howe have drifted into other lines in other theatres; Jane Reynolds and Amy Sedgwick have long since retired from the stage; and the younger Mrs. Fitzwilliam (Ellen Chaplin) has sought new fortunes in Australia. Not one of the old company has remained to appear in the new temple of comedy.

"As regards the performance of 'Ranelagh,' one reminiscence of a trait of humour in poor old Buckstone flashes up.

"The play was given on alternate nights, during an



engagement of Miss Charlotte Cushman, I believe,—during the performances of some star, at all events, and these nights, three times a week, were looked on as 'off-nights.' A leading daily paper had attacked the piece as 'bristling with improprieties—we were more prudish then, if possible, than now—and I complained to Buckstone of what I considered a piece of gross injustice. 'I didn't see the paragraph,' said the manager, with a merry twinkle in his eye. 'But the accusation will account for the long string of carriages on the off-nights. Carriage people are sure to come in shoals when they think they can see anything naughty.'

"My reminiscence as connected with 'Second Love' (an ill-advised title forced on me by Buckstone, I never quite knew why) is of a far different description, and not lacking a certain degree of interest. I had been suffering from a bad rheumatic fever. For many days I was delirious; and how I dreaded closing my eyes in sleep, to suffer from those terrible dreams! A more pleasant vision came early one morning. I dreamed that Buckstone sat by my bedside and said, 'Cheer up, my boy, you are getting better. And I'll tell you what you shall do for me. You shall write me a comedy, in which I can play the devoted cousin of a blind girl. She shall treat me like a faithful dog, name me "Fido," and wear a whistle for me round her neck. Before I come on she shall call "Fido! Fido!" and whistle; I shall say "Bow-wow" behind the scenes, and everybody will laugh.'

"The memory of the dream remained strong on me as I woke. As soon as I could get to work I wrote my drama, starting from this little basis. Buckstone played the faithful doggie; Miss Reynolds called 'Fido,' and



*Photo by* JOHN OXFORD. *[Chas. Watkins,*  
(*Critic of The Times.)*



H. J. BYRON.



*Photo by* J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON. *[Chas. Watkins,*



whistled for him; Buckstone barked 'Bow-wow' behind the scenes; the audience laughed (as it was sure to do); and all turned out as prophesied to me in my dream of fever. The piece was a great success; and for a long time it remained a favourite stock-piece in America. It is still played frequently in the country as 'The Blind Girl's Fortune.'

"As regards 'World and Stage,' it may be noticed as affording Miss Ellen Terry her first appearance in a part of any considerable importance—that of Lady Castlecrag. I, at least, cannot forget the sweet promise she gave, as a very young girl, of future excellence in a performance full of sympathy and finesse.

"Now, has all this been worth telling you, as connected with the old Haymarket—the defunct Haymarket of so many historical theatrical recollections? It is dead, and a new Haymarket is rising, phoenix-like, from its ashes. *Le Roi est mort ! Vive le Roi !*

"J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON."

I received a few years ago a valuable memorandum prepared by my friend, E. Y. Lowne, containing authentic copies of original letters which form part of that enthusiastic gentleman's *Macreadiana*, a collection of material illustrative of the theatrical career of that tragedian. Mr. Lowne says:—

"The following letters were written by W. C. Macready, to Morris, the proprietor of the Haymarket Theatre in 1817; this being Macready's second year in London, when he was apparently seeking an engagement at the 'Summer' Theatre—the big houses being then closed for the season. Note that he writes his name then as McCready, which he subsequently altered to Macready :

“‘SIR,—I was honoured with your note yesterday morning, in reply to which I beg to offer the following proposals to the consideration of the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre. I am ignorant of Mr. Jones’s terms, but I should have no objection to accept them at a hazard, or a salary of fifteen pounds per week. If these are acceptable I shall be most happy to conclude an engagement.

“‘I have the honour to be, Sir,

“‘Your obedient servant,

“‘W. MCCREADY.

“‘58, FRITH STREET, SOHO,

“‘*Wednesday morning.*’

“The above letter bears a pencil endorsement : ‘Propose at £14.’ To this Macready replies :

“‘SIR,—Business which it was not in my power to defer, will, I trust, apologise for my seeming inattention to your favour.

“‘The terms which the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre have done me the honour to propose are so unequal to the remuneration which the country holds out to me, that I am compelled to decline them. I cannot avoid adding, most reluctantly, since with them I resign the prospect of that improvement in my profession which I should have hoped for under the auspices of Mr. Colman.

“‘I have the honour to be, Sir,

“‘Your obedient servant,

“‘W. MCCREADY.

“‘58, FRITH STREET,

“‘*April 2nd, 1817.*’”

The earliest Haymarket bills I can find amongst the few I have left are 1797–99; in the former I find :

"April 8th, 1797, 'The School for Scandal,' with King as Sir Peter Teazle; Miss Farren, Lady Teazle; John Palmer, Joseph Surface; Robert Palmer, Sir Benjamin Backbite; Charles Kemble, Careless; Miss Pope, Mrs. Candour; and underlined, 'by particular desire.'

"On Easter Monday, the tragedy of 'George Barnwell,' the part of Millwood by Mrs. Siddons (being her last appearance in that character).

"On Wednesday" (never acted) "a new comedy, in which Mrs. Jordan will make her appearance." Later on I find Charles Kemble playing Count Almaviva (his first appearance in that character), with Palmer as Figaro, and "Dicky Suett" as Antonio. Chippendale (the father of our old Chip) is also in the cast, which is in August, 1799.

I thought I could have laid my hand on the bill of Charles Kemble's first appearance as Vapour in "My Grandmother," a part in which Oxberry says that he was not only hissed but remonstrated with by a gentleman in the pit upon the impropriety of his attempting a part so completely beyond his powers. In July, 1806, I find "Five Miles Off, or the Fingerpost," a comedy in three acts, being played with Rae in the principal character, and Edmund Kean as a "super" in the same piece."

I have alluded to the veteran Henry Howe's statement about the first appearance of gas at the Haymarket Theatre. I have since discovered that gas was used at the old Covent Garden Theatre as far back as 1828, but was discarded as offensive and dangerous into the bargain. What would Edmund Kean and Fawcett have thought of our smart, clean and beautiful electric light?

These bills on the subject of gas seem to be extremely interesting :—

### COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE.

*Closed for One Week.*

### ADDRESS.

WHEN the brilliancy of Gas illumination attracted Public admiration, the Proprietors of this Theatre anxious to adopt every Improvement which would give brilliancy to the Scenery, and the appearance of the Theatre, introduced it ; and to prevent the accidents which the best Street illumination is liable to, they at a great expense constructed Gasometers ; finding however that with the utmost care and skill, the introduction of Gas in the audience part of the Theatre, produced an offensive odour, and the Public having suffered inconvenience and disappointment in their amusements, by the mischievous agency of some malignant and interested Persons ; the Proprietors have determined to remove the Gas, not only from the Box Circles, but from all internal avenues leading to them, as well as to the Pit and Galleries.

But as this important Alteration cannot be effectually done, while the Theatre is nightly open, without the Public being put to inconvenience, the Managers have determined to submit to the heavy loss of Closing their Theatre, rather than allow the Public to suffer any drawback to their Theatrical Enjoyments.

The Public is in consequence respectfully informed, that as the proposed Improvements cannot be executed in less than a Week, the Theatre will remain

CLOSED TILL MONDAY, THE 24TH INSTANT,

when they hope to welcome the Public to a Theatre, where no Expense will be spared, or Zeal remitted, to render it worthy the liberal Patronage it has ever enjoyed.

J. FAWCETT, Stage Manager.

### THE RE-OPENING OF COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE.

The Public attention is respectfully solicited to the following Facts :—

The Gasometers, and Apparatus for making Gas, are destroyed, and no more Gas will be manufactured within the walls of the Theatre.

The Circles of Boxes will be illuminated with Wax.

The Lights in the front of the Stage, and of every internal avenue to Box, Pit, and Galleries, will be produced by the agency of the purest oil.

The Proprietors and Managers, having called in the powers of Chemistry, having exerted the most indefatigable industry, and having cheerfully expended a considerable sum in rendering Covent-Garden Theatre worthy

the Patronage it has hitherto been favoured with, the Public are respectfully invited to the

Re-opening on Thursday next, Nov. 27, 1828, when  
MR. KEAN will perform, for the fourth time this season, the character of

*Richard the Third,*

To which will be added

"THE BEGGAR'S OPERA."

*Capt. Macheath*, Mr. Wood ; *Lucy*, Miss Goward (her first appearance in that character) ; *Polly*, Miss Byfeld (being her fifth appearance on any stage).

On Friday will be revived the Comedy of

"THE INCONSTANT."

*Old Mirabel*, Mr. Bartley ; *Young Mirabel*, Mr. C. Kemble ; *Durutele*, Mr. Wrench ; *Bizarre*, Mrs. Chatterley ; *Oriana*, Mrs. Pindar.

To be followed by a new Petite Divertissement, called

"OFFERINGS TO VENUS."

The Music, entirely new, composed by Mr. Watson.

Principal Dancers—Mr. D'Albert (from the King's Theatre),  
Mesd. Bedford, Vedy, Rountree, Ryals, Griffiths, Thomasin,  
Kendall, F. Marshal.

After which will be produced a Farce, founded on "The Sultan," with  
New Music, called

"THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL,"

When Mr. Wood (being recovered) will perform the Character originally intended for him. The other principal characters by Mr. Duruset, Mr. Keeley, Madame Vestris, Miss Hughes, &c., &c.

On Saturday will be revived Wycherley's Comedy of "THE COUNTRY GIRL," in which a young lady will appear for the first time on any stage in the character of *Peggy* ; *Moody*, Mr. Fawcett ; *Belvil*, Mr. Duruset ; *Harcourt*, Mr. Warde ; *Sparkish*, Mr. Green ; *Alithea*, Mrs. Chatterley, *Lucy*, Mrs. Gibbs.

To which will be added a favourite Musical Entertainment, in which  
Madame Vestris will perform.

And on Monday MR. KEAN will perform, for the first time, the character of *Virginus*, which Tragedy has been long in preparation.

To conclude with the favourite Melo-Drama of "The Forty Thieves." A new Opera, in three acts, the Music by Signor Liverati and Lee, with new Scenes, Dresses and Decorations, will be immediately produced.

A new Tragedy, in five acts, is in active preparation. Weber's splendid Opera of "Oberon" is in rehearsal.

Now let us get on to the equally famous comedy "London Assurance," as performed in March, 1841, at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. I am fortunate enough to possess a rather valuable second edition of



the play, dedicated to "Charles Kemble with his kind permission by his fervent admirer and humble servant, Dion L. Bourcicault," as he then signed himself. This second edition, printed for the author, and sold by J. Andrews at his library, 167, New Bond Street, dated 1841, contains an extraordinary preface by the author, which is well worth quoting, as descriptive of the play and the players of that period.

Here are the enthusiastic author's exact words :—

"There is a species of literary modesty observed by authors of the present day—I mean that of prefacing their works with an apology for taking the liberty of inflicting them upon the patient public. Many require no such plea; but the following pages are too full of flagrant faults to pass from me without some few words of extenuation.

"The management of Covent Garden Theatre requested me to write a comedy—a modern comedy. I feared that I was unequal to the task; but, by the encouragement and kindness of Mr. Charles Mathews, I was induced to attempt it. Once begun, the necessity of excessive rapidity became evident; and, on the spur of the moment, I completed this work in thirty days. I had no time to revise or correct; the ink was scarcely dry before it was in the theatre and accepted. I am aware that it possesses all the many faults, incongruities, and excrescences of a hastily-written performance.

"It will not bear analysis as a literary production. In fact, my sole object is to throw together a few scenes of a dramatic nature, and therefore I studied the stage rather than the moral effect. I attempted to instil a pungency into the dialogue, and to procure vivid tones by a strong antithesis of character. The moral which I

intended to convey is expressed in the last speech of the comedy, but as I wrote '*currente calamo*' I have doubtless through the play strayed far wide of my original intent.

"Let me take this opportunity of stating the facts attending my reception at Covent Garden Theatre, as it may also hold out encouragement to the faint hearts of many entering the perilous shoals of dramatic literature.

"In the beginning of last November I entered this establishment under the assumed name of Lee Moreton. I was wholly unknown to any person therein. I received every mark of kindness and attention on the part of the management, and was cordially welcomed on all sides. My productions were read without loss of time; and the rapidity with which this play was produced, together with the unsparing liberality of its appointments, give ample proof that the field is open to all comers.

"'*London Assurance*' was made to order on the shortest possible notice. I could have wished that my first appearance before the public had not been in this out-of-breath style; but I saw my opportunity at hand, I knew how important it was not to neglect the chance of production, the door was open, I had a run for it, and here I am!

"How shall I return thanks adequate to the general sympathy and hearty good will I have received at the hands of the mass of talent congregated in this piece?

"Mr. William Farren's personation of Sir Harcourt Courtly made me regret that I had not the part to rewrite. The *ci-devant* jeune homme, the veteran roué, consummate vanity, tinged with lively perception redolent with the very essence of etiquette, the exquisite—the vane of the beau monde—were consummated in his

appearance before a word was uttered. He more than shared the creation of the character.

“Mr. Harley, in Meddle, was, as Mr. Harley is universally acknowledged to be, irresistible.

“Who could view the quiet, deliberate, impertinent, the bare-faced impudence of Dazzle, reflected in Mathews, without the reiterated roars of laughter which attended nearly every word he uttered? Passages which I never intended as hits were loaded, primed and pointed with an effect as unexpected to me as it was pleasing.

“Mr. Bartley, as Max, gave a tone and feeling to the country Squire both fresh and natural. To this gentleman I am under the greatest obligations for the numerous and valuable suggestions which he tendered, and to him I must attribute to a great extent the success of the piece.

“I have to offer my most sincere thanks to Mr. Anderson for the kind manner in which he accepted the part of Courtly. The prominence which it held in the representation was wholly attributable to his excellent impersonation.

“What can I say to Mr. Keeley? Praise would be superfluous. His part had but one fault in his hands,—it was not long enough. (Memo., to correct that another time.)

“Out of the trivial character of Cool, Mr. Brindal produced effects wholly unexpected. Let him not imagine that by mentioning him last, I prize him least.

“Mrs. Nisbett did not enact, she *was* Lady Gay Spanker, the substance of my thoughts; she wore the character with grace and ease, divesting it of any coarseness, yet enjoying all its freedom. She dashed in like a flash of lightning, and was greeted with a thunder of applause. What can I say of this laughing frolic

creature? Has Momus a wife? If he has not, let him make haste.

"Mrs. Humby, with her usual good nature, undertook a very paltry page or two; grinding blunt humour into the keenest edge with a power which she alone possesses.

"To those who have witnessed this play I need not describe my gratitude, to Mrs. Charles Mathews (Madame Vestris),—to those who have not seen it, I must own my inability of expression. I am well aware that to her judgment, taste, and valuable suggestion, with regard to alterations of character, situation, dialogue, expunging passages, and dilating others, to her indefatigable zeal I owe my position. All this being independent of her participation in the performance, would it not be vanity in me to add a mite of praise to that which has been showered around her throughout her life? Details were vain. No one could guess my countless obligations had they not witnessed the conferring of them

"For the success of this play I have to thank a most indulgent audience, an ultra-liberal management, an unrivalled cast; but little, very little is due to the public's humble servant, D. L. B."

Is not this preface an object lesson to the young and inexperienced dramatic author of to-day, who thinks that he is insulted because commercial managers do not always estimate him at his own worth? Scarcely a theatrical paper is published to-day that does not teem with grumbling letters from young authors who insist that the stage is going to the dogs because managers will not take inexperienced youth at its own value. Managers may have their faults, like the rest of us; but they are not quite so senseless as to cut off their noses to spite their faces.

If ambitious amateurs will condescend to learn their business and study the stage, then they are certain of a reception and a success. There are no "dramatic rings" or "cabals" or anything of the kind. It is the veriest moonshine. Managers are only too anxious to secure new and workmanlike plays, and to encourage new and clever authors.

Here, in 1841, is a youthful, untried author, scarcely out of his teens, who, with full heart, owns that as a tyro his play has been immediately accepted; that it has been rehearsed and perfectly acted; and that he owes innumerable obligations, not only to the actors and actresses, but to those immediately concerned in the production, who evidently made a success out of what might otherwise in its crude state have proved unfortunately a failure. The reason that the majority of our best plays are and have been written by actors, is that these actors have studied the stage for which they write, appreciate the value of dramatic effect, and understand the dialogue that the theatre requires.

Boucicault, Robertson, Carton, Pinero are cases in point. They were all actors; and if actresses are not authoresses, they have had a vast amount to do with the shaping and moulding of successful plays. Marie Bancroft and Mrs. Kendal have done it scores of times, and made valuable what would otherwise have been worthless.

These are the sentences at the conclusion of "London Assurance" on which Dion Boucicault, the author of them, lays so much stress as containing the gist and moral of his play.

*Young Courtly.* "Dazzle, Dazzle, will you excuse an impertinent question, but who the deuce are you?"

*Dazzle.* "Certainly, I haven't the remotest idea."

*All.* "How, Sir?"

*Dazzle.* "Simple question as you may think it, it would puzzle half the world to answer. One thing I can vouch : nature made me a gentleman, that is, I live on the best that can be procured for credit. I never spend my own money when I can oblige a friend. I am always thick on the winning horse. I'm an epidemic on the trade of tailor. For further particulars inquire of any sitting magistrate."

*Sir Harcourt.* "And these are the deeds which attest your title to the name of gentleman ! I perceive that you have caught the infection of the present age. Charles, permit me as your father, and you, Sir, as his friend, to correct you on one point. Barefaced assurance is the vulgar substitute for gentlemanly ease ; and there are many who, by aping the vices of the great, imagine that they elevate themselves to the rank of those whose faults alone they copy. No, Sir, the title of gentleman is the only one out of any monarch's gift, yet within the reach of every peasant. It should be engrossed by *Truth*, stamped *Honour*, sealed with *Good-feeling*, signed *Man*, and enrolled in every true young English heart."

Surely the world and human nature have not changed very much after all in sixty years, when we read between the lines of this theatrical tirade, or tag. There is plenty of London assurance to-day, there are scores of Dazzles ; let us hope that they will be guided by the advice, the common sense and the knowledge of the world, shown by many a Sir Harcourt Courtly.

The authorship of two very celebrated plays has ever been in dispute. Who wrote "London Assurance" ? Dion Boucicault or John Brougham ? Who wrote "Plot and Passion" ? Tom Taylor or John Lang, the Indian Civil Servant ? I fear the truth will never be told in either case. Having heard from Stephen Fiske, who in America

and in England has been brilliantly and industriously writing about the stage of both countries for fifty years or more, that the disputed "London Assurance" question was settled ages ago in the well-known and historic solicitor's office that bears to some the dreaded name of Lewis and Lewis, 10, Ely Place, I wrote some ten years ago to Sir George Lewis to ascertain if he could settle the question. He sent me the following courteous reply, but it unfortunately left the matter exactly where it was before.

"10 AND 11, ELY PLACE, HOLBORN,

"LONDON, E.C.,

"7th October, 1890.

"DEAR MR. SCOTT,—I am in receipt of your note of the 6th inst., and regret that I am unable to give you the information for which you ask. The Mr. George Lewis referred to must be my late uncle and partner, because the events to which attention is called arose before I entered the profession.

"Believe me, yours faithfully,

"GEORGE H. LEWIS.

"CLEMENT SCOTT, ESQ.,

"52, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS."

The truth of the matter I believe to be this: that there existed a play and a novel on the same subject. Tom Taylor's play was produced on October 22nd, 1853, and John Lang's novel appeared in the *Welcome Guest*, dated February 5th, 1858.

On the subject of "playing 'em in and playing 'em out," the veteran playgoer, John Gideon, remarks, apropos of "London Assurance":—

"On the 12th of January, 1843, the bill at the Haymarket was "London Assurance," with Charles Mathews as Dazzle, and Madame Vestris as Grace Harkaway, in

which part she sang Tully's "Lovely Night." The next evening Charley was Captain Absolute, and Madame Vestris Lydia Languish; and on the following night he was the Charles Surface to his wife's Lady Teazle. The comedies were followed nightly by Planché's two-act extravaganza "Riquet with the Tuft," in which the two played the parts they had originally created seven years before at the Olympic, and sung every night six songs each.

"The performance concluded each night with a one act drama, called 'The Bastile,' in which H. Holl, who had acted in the above comedies, Benjamin Webster—the manager, mark ye! and Madame Celeste, 'went on' at eleven o'clock, to what is now called 'playing 'em out.' Madame Vestris frequently did it when lessee of the Olympic and Covent Garden Theatres, and Charles Mathews, W. Farren the elder, Buckstone, James Vining, Walter Lacy, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Humby, Mrs. Walter Lacy, and Mrs. Orger, never thought it *infra dig.* to follow in their artistic wake. Why, if a manager of to-day were to only hint such a line of business to any of his company that had a standing, the reply would be the sending in of their notice to quit. Lovers of art, where are you now?"

Dion Lardner Boucicault, as he was afterwards called, was a very remarkable man; and as he played such an important part in the history of the drama of his time I cannot do better than quote *in extenso* a very valuable and accurate biography of this celebrated actor and author, written by Stephen Fiske, the able journalist who knew him well, both in this country and in America.



I can confirm much that is there said. I knew Dion Boucicault in the "Colleen Bawn" days at the Adelphi, when he had a magnificent mansion and grounds at Old Brompton, now known, I think, as Coleherne Court. I knew him in the days of the "Shaughraup" at the same theatre, and I met him constantly at the tables of Edmund Yates, J. C. M. Bellew, and Shirley Brooks, and I was also a frequent guest at his own table, when he lived, as he ever did, money or no money, credit or no credit, *en prince*, at his flat on the first floor in Regent Street, at the corner of Mortimer Street.

Dion was a bon viveur, a gourmand, and a gourmet, and certainly one of the most brilliant conversationalists it has ever been my happy fortune to meet. To hear him describe the plot of a play, his small Irish eyes sparkling, and the words all well chosen, pouring out like a torrent and cataract, was to see it acted before your eyes in every detail, and his general information on every conceivable subject was quite remarkable.

How, with little or no education, he knew what he did know, was to me absolutely mysterious. I saw very little of him after that strange and unaccountable disappearance to America on the night of the outrageously costly spectacle "Babil and Bijou" at Covent Garden, when, having been asked by that devoted and loyal patron of the drama—Lord Londesborough—to write a play or a comedy, he of course did neither, but literally made ducks and drakes of his friend's money, and produced a quite unnecessary spectacle, with reckless extravagance.

He engaged Helen Barry for a stately Amazon, which indeed she was, and of most remarkable beauty;



*Photos by* MRS. DICK BOUCRAULT.



DICK BOUCRAULT [*Adolphe Bea*



*Photos by* MISS HERBERT.  
("Isle of St. Tropez.")



ALFRED WIGAN. [*Adolphe Bea*.  
("Isle of St. Tropez.")



introduced Henriette D'Or, one of the most graceful dancers of the old ballet school ever seen in this country ; gave commissions to the veteran Planché to write verses for the music of Hervé and Fred Clay ; asked Rivière to compose songs and choruses, amongst which was the celebrated "Spring, Spring, beautiful Spring" for boys' voices, one of the unexpected successes of the play ; gave us Mrs. Howard Paul, Mrs. Billington, Lal Brough, J. B. Howe, Turtle Jones—called so on account of the creature of calipash and calipee he represented ; served up scarlet boiled lobsters at the bottom of the ocean, committed himself to innumerable anachronisms ; and then "made tracks" for America. This fairy piece cost at least £11,000 !

But I have never ceased to admire, to respect, and sympathise with his gentle, loyal, devoted, and affectionate wife, a ward of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean and the original Colleen Bawn, one of the sweetest little Irish actresses we have ever seen, though she was Agnes Robertson, a Scotchwoman by birth, and one who has borne her sorrows with pathetic resignation and has earned the respect of all her devoted friends.

Stephen Fiske is evidently of the same opinion as I have always been regarding the illustrious Dion. Listen to what he said when Boucicault died in America :

"Dion Boucicault is dead and buried ; Mrs. Thorn-dyke Boucicault is overwhelmed with grief at his death ; Mrs. Agnes Robertson Boucicault is coming across the ocean to look after his property. It is to be hoped that these two ladies will settle their affairs quietly, and let the dead dramatist rest in peace. According to the biographical records, Boucicault was born at Dublin in 1822 of a French refugee father and an Irish mother.

Of this record nothing is known to be true, except that Boucicault's mother was Irish. We have seen her—a stately, brunette lady, venerable, white-haired and very silent—and the likeness to Dion was unmistakable. But Boucicault often told us that he was of the same age as Lester Wallack—which would make him nearer seventy-five than sixty-eight—and as to his birth-place, actors are born wherever it pleases them. How often have they been heard to repeat the speech about 'my dear native town' in a dozen different places?

"One of the arguments employed to prove that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's works is that nobody knows anything about Shakespeare, who lived three hundred years ago. Yet here is the Shakespeare of Ireland, who has been with us all these years and who died only last week, and yet nobody knows positively how old he was, where he was born, or who was his father. Shakespeare's name is spelled differently in various documents—another argument in favour of Bacon. But Boucicault's name used to be spelled Bourcicault; he altered it only a few years ago, and it was probably neither Bourcicault nor Boucicault when he left Dublin for London, and assumed all the "London assurance" after which he named his best comedy,

"Another Baconian argument is that nobody knows how Shakespeare got the education which he showed in his plays. Where did Boucicault get his education? He spoke French as fluently as English; his Latin quotations were as pat as his Irish wit. At sixteen years of age he had astonished the world with one of the brightest comedies in any language. When and where did he find time to study? After three hundred years, commentators are puzzled by the problem how Shakespeare, a mere lad, just from Stratford-on-Avon,

could have written 'Hamlet.' Yet no commentator can explain how Boucicault, a mere boy, fresh from Dublin, could write 'London Assurance'—and Boucicault has not been dead a week.

"But, not to push too curiously a comparison that will suggest itself to everybody, let us add that in personal appearance Boucicault was not unlike the pictures of Shakespeare. He had the same doined head, and some of the same qualities inside it. The one great dissimilarity is that Boucicault was not a poet of the first rank, like Shakespeare. But he had the poetry as well as the humour of the Irish. He did for Ireland by his splendid trio of plays—'The Colleen Bawn,' 'Arrah-na Pogue,' and 'The Shaughraun,'—what Shakespeare did for England in his historical plays.

"He was an adaptor, like Shakespeare; his plays were constructed according to the Shakespearean canons. Had Providence added dramatic poetry to his other gifts, he would have been a modern Shakespeare. Instead, he inherited a French ingenuity, neatness and dexterity, which made his plays marvels of workmanship, no matter from what original he Boucicaulted the characters and the story.

"There are traditions that Boucicault was an amateur actor in Dublin, just as there are traditions that Shakespeare killed deer in the Lucy park. Nobody knows. He appeared in London at sixteen, clever enough to write 'London Assurance,' and to get it acted at Covent Garden by the best English company ever collected.

"Where did he get the money to sustain himself in London? How did he secure introductions to the leading actors and managers? Again, nobody knows. His name, which seems like a contraction of

Dionysius, suggests some connection with Dr. Dionysius Lardner, a learned man who became immortal by predicting that a steamship could not cross the Atlantic. What was this connection? The biographies say that he was Dr. Lardner's pupil in civil engineering. Perhaps. But it is strange that a pupil should be named after his professor—or assume the name in after life.

“The easy escape from the problem of how a Dublin boy could write ‘London Assurance’ was to say that John Brougham wrote it. Undoubtedly, John Brougham supervised it and made some suggestions; but he never ventured to say that ‘London Assurance’ was his play. The matter was finally settled in the office of Lewis and Lewis, Ely Place, London, years ago, when Brougham signed a document stating just what work he had done on the comedy, and a receipt in full of all demands. Doubtless George Lewis still has these papers.

“But a far better proof is that Boucicault went on writing comedies like ‘London Assurance’ but not quite so popular, such as ‘The Irish Heiress,’ and ‘Old and Young Hearts’; while Brougham never wrote anything at all like it, his best comedy, ‘Playing with Fire,’ being in an entirely different style.

“There are living men who remember Boucicault's early days in London, when he translated and adapted French plays for Charles Kean and Ben Webster, and when he eloped with and married pretty Agnes Robertson, the adopted daughter of Kean. Edmund Yates could tell this story. About his marriage there is no doubt. He alternately asserted and denied it; but we have the evidence in his own handwriting and in the decision of the English Courts.

“But there is still a mystery. Boucicault had been married before. He went to Paris, and secured a wife

with money through a matrimonial agency. They took a tour through Switzerland. Boucicault went up the Alps with a wife, and came down with a black hatband. How did the bride die? Nobody knows; but Boucicault must have inherited her money, for he returned to London and drove a pair of gray ponies in Hyde Park, and resumed his semi-fashionable, semi-Bohemian life.

"He adapted many plays, but authors' fees were small. Most of his adaptations were never produced. Some consisted only of a roll of blank paper, with a title written on the cover. Ben Webster used to show us specimens of these, and say, 'I gave Boucicault ten guineas for this—twenty guineas for that—he said it was a comedy, a drama, I forget what.' But Boucicault himself told us that he was a lucky bag out of which some managers drew fortunes and some blanks. Charles Kean drew 'Louis the Eleventh'; Webster drew 'The Willow Copse'; Jefferson drew 'Rip Van Winkle'; Irving drew 'Hunted Down.' No wonder they could afford to buy blank paper now and then from such a magician

"If Boucicault had been an amateur actor in Dublin, why did he not go upon the stage when pressed for money? He never thought of it until his mother urged him to become an actor, so as to protect his young, pretty, and inexperienced wife. We have this fact in his own handwriting. He called his wife Miss Agnes Robertson, and kept away from the theatres when she first appeared in this country, because he thought that an unmarried woman would draw more money in America.

"Convinced that he was wrong when he came to know America better, he proclaimed his marriage



from the stage at Boston, and settled down here as a family man. He had six children, all handsome and all clever. These children he declared illegitimate when he wanted to marry Miss Thorndyke. Such an outrage can only be ascribed to the temporary insanity of an old man's passion. After committing it Boucicault became dead to his friends, to his art, to his public. His later works were unworthy of him. He grew to look like Rip Van Winkle. Something within him had broken—perhaps it was his heart—when he realised the infamy he had been induced to commit unnecessarily.

“But the story of these later days does not belong to the life of the real Boucicault. In his prime, making hundreds of thousands of dollars by his plays, and writing them as fast as they were wanted, he was a prince in hospitality. The best men of three countries gathered round his table, and he could hold his own with all of them. His house in New York and his apartment in London were little palaces, where the feasts of reason were only equalled by the dinners, and the flow of soul by the wines. Himself a capital cook, he prided himself upon his cuisine, his wine cellar, and his cigars.

“For ten years he ruled the theatrical world of London and New York. ‘I am an emperor,’ he said, ‘and take what I think best for Art, whether it be a story from a book, a play from the French, an actor from a rival company.’ This sounds like boasting; but Boucicault not only said it—he did it. Nobody ever disputed his supremacy.

“Columns have been written about Boucicault as a dramatist; but he was almost equally wonderful, and much more original, as an actor. In this respect, at least, he surpassed Shakespeare, who could play only the Ghost

in 'Hamlet,' and then hurry round to count up the receipts—thence the theatrical phrase 'the ghost walks,' meaning that the money for salaries is ready.

"As the Barrister in 'Jessie Brown,' as the Indian in 'The Octoroon,' and as the Vampyre, Boucicault has never been equalled, and in such Irish parts as the Shaughraun he has not been surpassed in our day, although Tyrone Power and John Drew may have equalled him. His acting of 'Louis the Eleventh,' with his Irish brogue, was as absurd as the canard that he wanted to play Hamlet. He could take the smallest character and make it great without interfering with the leading parts.

"As a stage manager, he taught the profession how to direct crowds long before the Meiningen troop was heard of. His supers all acted and made pictures. But Boucicault was, otherwise, not a good stage manager, because he changed his mind too often. What he told an actor yesterday he would contradict to-day, and that is fatal to stage business.

"Dramatic authors have to be grateful to Boucicault for raising the price of plays. He suffered from the English system of a few guineas in full for the copyright, and he introduced the French system of a percentage upon the receipts. This made him wealthy, and it has enriched every dramatist since. On the other hand, his device of engaging actors for certain parts, instead of for the season, has killed stock companies, and greatly injured the profession.

"Most managers are not mere janitors, who rent their theatres to travelling companies, and most actors are kept on 'the road,' like the vagabonds they were once legally called. Boucicault himself was not successful

as a manager. He threw away a fortune upon Astley's Theatre, London, and another upon the Winter Garden here. When he had altered Burton's Theatre into the Winter Garden, he discovered that he had so diminished its seating capacity that it could not pay expenses if it were crowded. This is a specimen of the engineering taught him by Dr. Lardner!

"To sum up a man of so many phases as Boucicault is impossible. He was everything by turns in the profession; he did everything well, and yet the outcome never benefited him, nor anybody concerned with him. He died poor; and all the managers with whom he was intimately connected, from old Ben Webster to Lester Wallack, also died poor. In business, he never knew the value of a contract, and prided himself upon never keeping his word unless he liked. In friendship, he was hot and cold by turns, but always brilliant, always enjoyable—always dangerous.

"When he christened his theatre the Winter Garden, he began to name his company after the flowers. Agnes Robertson was the violet; Mrs. John Wood, the tiger lily; Mrs. Chanfrau, the rose, and so on. Then somebody suggested that he had chosen no flower for himself. He laughed and asked, 'Well, what flower am I then?' Everybody expected that he would choose the shamrock; but, quick as a flash, Mrs. Wood said, 'You, dear Dion, are the deadly nightshade.' It was said in fun, and it was taken as a jest; but there was so much truth under the humour that a sudden chill fell upon the company, and even Boucicault gave a little superstitious shudder.

"How vividly this incident was recalled when we attended his obsequies, at an alien church, with none

of his old friends among the pall-bearers, with Clark Bell to represent the press for which Boucicault had written so brilliantly, and with no children to kneel beside his coffin and say, 'Father, we forgive and pray for you!'"

A better summary than this of an author, actor and manager in connection with his dazzling career was surely never written. It is bright, brilliant, effective, and truthful. With all his faults, Dion Boucicault was of immense service to the public, the stage, and his profession. He may have been as his enemies declared, unscrupulous, but he was never a snob. He was made welcome in the best society, but he did not, any more than E. A. Sothorn did, grovel before "swells," or allow them to patronise him. His Bohemia was of the best, the Bohemia of brains! Sothorn dwelt there at the same time.

As I have said before, the dispute, or difficulty, concerning the authorship of "London Assurance," as between Dion Boucicault and John Brougham, has never been satisfactorily cleared up; and now that Sir George Lewis is unable to throw any light on the subject, it probably never will. For many years it was insisted that Brougham wrote the entire part of Dazzle, with the inducement that he should himself play the character, but it is clear to me that the part was always intended for Charles Mathews.

Before I leave these old plays I will give another remarkable cast of Bulwer Lytton's "Money" during the lesseeship of John S. Clarke at the Haymarket in April, 1879, on the occasion of a complimentary benefit to E. L. Blanchard. I question if there has

been a better combination of names since the original cast.

William Terriss . . . as . . . . .	<i>Lord Glossmore.</i>
E. A. Sothern . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Sir Fredk. Blount.</i>
John S. Clarke . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Graves.</i>
David James . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Stout.</i>
William Farren, sen. „ . . . . .	<i>Sharp.</i>
Henry Neville . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Evelyn.</i>
John Ryder . . . „ . . . . .	<i>The Old Member.</i>
Frank Archer . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Dudley Smooth.</i>
John Maclean . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Sir John Vesey.</i>
Horace Wigan . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Franz.</i>
W. Belford . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Flat.</i>
F. W. Irish . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Patent.</i>
David Fisher, jun. . . „ . . . . .	<i>Macfinch.</i>
R. Soutar . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Green.</i>
Henry Howe . . . „ . . . . .	<i>Tabouret.</i>
Miss Clara Jecks . . „ . . . . .	<i>Sir John Vesey's Page.</i>
Miss Amy Roselle . „ . . . . .	<i>Clara Douglas.</i>
Mrs. John Wood . . „ . . . . .	<i>Lady Franklin.</i>

*Members of the Club*—Messrs. J. R. Planché, H. J. Byron, Murray, L. Brough, John Billington, W. H. Vernon, A. Garner, F. Mervin, Flockton, H. Ferrand, F. Wyatt, B. Dale, G. Murray, H. Green, Dillon Croker, Jonas Levy, H. Standing, B. L. Farjeon, &c.

*Servants and waiters*—Messrs. Rutland Barrington, Weatherby, Beer-bohm Tree, &c.

## CHAPTER IV

### "MY FIRST PLAY"

MEMORY plays one many an eccentric trick. Cultivate it assiduously, and it will never prove false to you ; but take no notes, make no memoranda, or your faithful memory will assuredly give you the slip. It has frequently been remarked to me when I have written a particularly long criticism—sometimes two columns in length—"I suppose you make copious notes during the performance !" To this my answer ever has been, "I never made a note in a theatre in all my life, save to jot down a sentence spoken upon the stage that I was anxious to quote verbatim."

From the earliest days I so trained my memory in the matter of descriptive work, that I arranged in my head exactly what I thought I should want to say when I began to write ; so that, when I sat down to do my work, I copied as it were off my brain what had been packed up there in little cells or on shelves for preservation. This plan has no doubt its disadvantages as well as its advantages. It makes one appear to be extremely irritable, disagreeable and churlish in a theatre, for the very excellent reason that you can attend to nothing and see nothing save the stage ; you are oblivious to friends, and seem to avoid everybody,

because you are actually working and taking impressions so to speak of material for future use, photographing it all on your brain the whole of the time.

A method of this kind is not, however, confined to journalists and descriptive writers. Many an actor of my acquaintance becomes like "a bear with a sore head" if he is spoken to just before he goes on to the stage. My dear old friend, John Sleeper Clarke, is a case in point. He would strike any one who dared address him when he was lashing himself up for a part before he made his entrance. Macready used to angrily shake ladders and groan himself into excitement. Lady Bancroft has often described for my benefit, in her inimitable style, the way in which Charles Dillon, one of her first London managers, danced and stamped about like a wild Indian whilst waiting at the wings for his cue, in order to rush on to the stage in a mad fury of passion. It is only your unsensitive, and often indifferent, actor who can instantly break away from chaff and conversation, and begin acting somebody else.

I was recently discussing the subject with Mrs. Kendal, an artist if ever there was one; and I was telling her how the modern actor, imperfect at rehearsal, would be found on the night of the production playing cards at his club within an hour of the rise of the curtain! What was the consequence? The prompter's voice, and not the actor's.

You should have seen Mrs. Kendal's look of amazement and horror, and have heard her describe the answers she gives to journalists and interviewers who want to see her "just for a few minutes between the acts."

"Tell the gentlemen," she said, "that I am at my business, and my business is to act, not to gossip."

Mrs. John Wood was eloquent on the same subject. "Art indeed!" she said; "what on earth do they know about art? All day they are reciting, or going to fêtes and fancy fairs, and kicking up their heels in society; and when they come to their work they are weary, brain-fagged and imperfect. The old actor never did that. He rehearsed from eleven to three; he came home and had an early dinner; then he slept, and awoke refreshed for his work. The theatre over, back home again to supper, then to bed, and ready for rehearsal on the morrow. How can actor or actress be fit for anything, when the theatre is followed by a sit up till four in the morning, at the club, or some society rout or entertainment?"

Pursuing this memorative and methodical plan as time advanced and as age crept swiftly on, it was the greatest possible help to me personally when various kind-hearted managers gave me the same privilege, which has been awarded for the last fifty years to the senior dramatic critic in London, of a private box. When I first began work in 1860, John Oxenford, of *The Times*, always had a private box.

The incessant chattering, comments, and society talk of the stalls, the comparing of notes, and a kind of antagonistic atmosphere, instead of a sympathetic one, must distract any writer who is following his own method of "writing in his head."

It does not matter in the least if you see a play at your ease in a theatre, and have time to cogitate quietly over it in your own "sanctum sanctorum." But if you have to write against time, and are to all intents and purposes forming your own opinion about the story, making up sentences and balancing things together as the play proceeds, then all I can say is that the very



slightest distraction is an incentive to irritability. On a few occasions when a private box could not be spared, I politely asked for a seat in the dress circle, the front row being to my mind the very best place from which to see a play.

But it must be remembered that I think I was the first journalist who attempted to make the account of a new play not so much a solemn and serious criticism as a picturesque report. Modern journalism demanded it, and I do not think on the whole it has been disadvantageous to the actor or his art. When I started as a journalist, the dramatic notices were, as a rule, ordinary reporting, and were occasionally postponed for several days. Now they are the best work that can be done in a given time. This is modern journalism!

Modern journalism having done so much for the stage, for the popularity of the theatre, and the actor's profession; the drama and the favourite of the hour having become as constant a subject for discussion as our old friend "the weather," is it not astonishing that one of our most experienced and popular actors should protest against what he calls the unfairness of first-night criticism? He asks in justice to the poor actor and actress that criticism should be postponed until the sixth or seventh night! Why not postpone it altogether? For what would be the inevitable result?

A new play is either news for a newspaper or it is not; and whilst the theatre is as popular as it is now, the best news of a good play will be printed next morning and not postponed, as it used to be in the slack days of journalism.

If a man with the "pen of a ready writer" can describe a battle for a newspaper before the smoke has drifted away from the field, as such master journalists

as Howard Russell, Archibald Forbes, and Bennett Burleigh have done; if a leader writer can sum up a debate in the House of Commons in the form of a bright and luminous essay, just as the paper is being rushed to press; if a descriptive writer can present his public with pen pictures of a Jubilee, a national procession, a review, a marriage, or a state funeral within a few minutes of their occurrence, surely a journalist who is worth his salt can describe a play and the acting contained in that play in a given hour and a half. If he cannot do so he has not qualified himself as a journalist. How does the actor suffer? There are scores of journalists who do not race against time. William Archer is the best of them. Is he not good enough for the nervous actor or one who\* will not study his words? I should have thought so. But even William Archer, with all his fine judicial quality, receives his impressions as a rule from a first-night performance.

The journalist who cannot write at top speed should not represent a daily newspaper; the speaker who breaks down when he addresses an audience has no right so to address an audience; the actor or actress who cannot give a good account of themselves on a first night have not qualified themselves for the art they represent.

But I go further, and say it is begging the question to maintain that on the whole the acting is better on the sixth or seventh night than on the first.

My experience is wholly the other way. Taking one play with another, one actor with another, I have never seen better acting all round on any night than on the first night. Every nerve is strained to do the best. Rehearsals, if worthy of the name, should have been

the practice; the first-night audience gives the inspiration and the electricity. To argue that at this date we should go back to delay criticism is as futile as to suggest that we should abandon locomotives, and motor cars, and cycles, and return to the stage coach or the "dandy horse." I do not think on the whole the actor has much to complain of in the way of persistent publicity.

Another disadvantage of my memorative plan was that rest was an impossibility until, so to speak, you had removed what you had to say from "off your chest." When the notice was finished and the brain clear, I was always able to sleep like a top. But when the play came out on a Saturday night, there was no wink of sleep for me until my task was over and ended on Sunday. By the way, I, at least, was a journalist who for years worked seven days a week, and frequently had no Sunday rest.

All night long I was framing and reframing phrases and sentences, and mentally criticising the play and the performers. Nor was this all.

The great "crux" to me has ever been the first sentence leading to the opening paragraphs. Once get that clear and then all was plain sailing. The criticism seemed to flow naturally when the tap was turned on. I would never have dared on any night to have entered a newspaper office without having my first sentence ready cut and dried. I wrote for some years for the *Observer* when its offices were next door to the Strand Theatre, with the Opera Comique and Globe Theatres within a stone's throw. As there was scarcely time to make a first sentence before going in, I had to take a little walk down Surrey Street as a preliminary canter.

To be asked by a brother critic to walk with him

down to Fleet Street after the play was, for me, fatal. I wanted to start working as I walked, but he naturally wanted to talk and to compare notes.

Well, then, you will as a matter of course want to know why I did not write my notice on the Saturday night? To which question I can only answer, like the obstinate child, "because I didn't," or, in other words, I suppose because I was not compelled to do so, as the Monday paper did not go to press until late on Sunday. This is human nature. But, all the same, it is a mere quibble to say that I did not work for seven days a week. When others were rushing down to Brighton or Clacton on Saturday with a clear Sunday before them, I was kept in London all Saturday, shut up in a theatre until midnight, worried with a sleepless night, and with Sunday devoted to clearing one's brain of the impressions of hours before! Is this not working for seven days a week?

Once pursue my plan, and you will find that the play and the details of it fade very quickly from the mind, unless the impression is an extremely vivid one. So that in my case an eight-day delayed notice would have been a very hazy and nebulous one, and distinctly more unfair to the actor than a first-night notice. In later years, I have often had to see a play twice, when writing more than one notice of it, in order to get a fresh impression. The first had evaporated—luckily for me, for a head containing a storehouse of cells, crammed full of the plays of forty years, must have burst open years ago.

In my time I have done almost as much descriptive writing as theatrical work; but not even at Jubilees, royal weddings, funerals, processions, race meetings, regattas, cricket matches, or seaside haunts, have I ever

been seen with a note-book in my hand. I kept writing in my mind all the time I was observing.

But how is it that memory as the years advance is more faithful to the past than to the present? I can remember the plays and the acting I saw in my boyhood and youth far better than I can those of maturer days. This is invariably the case. It has often surprised many who have heard me say that I have seen Madame Vestris on the stage,—the lovely Madame Vestris of the Olympic, Covent Garden, and Lyceum Theatres, who was the first wife of that delightful comedian Charles Mathews—my idol as a child—and destined to be a very dear friend in later years.

I was a playgoer in a very small way before the forties had expired, and, this being so, it has ever been the regret of my life that I—as I believe was the case with Henry Irving and Bancroft—never saw Macready act, as I might well have done, since he only retired in 1851, when he acted Macbeth to the Macduff of Samuel Phelps, Macduff as usual scoring off Macbeth at a trying time for the Thane. But I shall describe all that at greater length presently.

I do not know how it was, but as children we were very seldom taken to a pantomime; but a charming old friend of the family made a point of always treating us to seats in the front row of the Lyceum dress-circle—the self-same theatre that exists to-day—at the Easter and Christmas seasons, for at those times what were then called Easter pieces were as fashionable as Boxing Night plays.

I had not aspired to the dignity of an Eton jacket, pepper-and-salt trousers, and a turn-over collar, when I saw Charles Mathews in “Used Up” and as Affable Hawk in “A Game of Speculation,” and Madame

Vestris in those beautiful fairy extravaganzas by Planché—with whose friendship I was also honoured as a youth—"The King of the Peacocks," "The Island of Jewels," and "King Charming."

I have insisted before, and shall if necessary insist again, that the era of natural acting, of decent stage arrangement and of dressing a character as it should be dressed, dates long before those sixties on which we once so prided ourselves, and which, alas! are now so cynically despised. Few know how much was due to the good taste and the refinement of Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews at the Olympic and Covent Garden Theatres.

These are the words of Charles Mathews, and they are proof positive that the well-ordered stage dates from almost the commencement of the Victorian Era :

"The theatre for my début as an actor was chosen without a moment's hesitation. I had no passion for what was called 'the regular drama.' I had no respect for traditional acting, and had no notion of taking a 'line of business,' as it is called—that is, undertaking for so much per week all the characters in comedy and tragedy, whether fitting or not, played by Charles Kemble, or Mr. Jones, or Mr. Elliston, whose every movement was registered in the prompt book, and from whose 'business,' as it is technically termed, no deviation was allowed. The lighter phase of comedy, representing the more natural and less laboured school of modern life, and holding the mirror up to nature without regard to the conventionalities of the theatre, was the aim I had in view.

"The Olympic was then the only house where this could be achieved, and to the Olympic I at once at-

tached myself. There was introduced for the first time in England that reform in all theatrical matters which has since been adopted in every theatre in the kingdom. Drawing-rooms were fitted up like drawing-rooms, and furnished with care and taste. Two chairs no longer indicated that two persons were to be seated, the two chairs being removed indicating that the two persons were not to be seated. A claret-coloured coat, salmon-coloured trousers with a broad black stripe, a sky-blue neckcloth with large paste brooch, and a cut-steel eye-glass with a pink ribbon no longer marked the 'light comedy gentleman,' and the public at once recognised and appreciated the change."

My old friend, Godfrey Turner, gives a pleasant recollection of Madame Vestris in the old Olympic days.

"There was a theatre to which, in my childhood, I very seldom went, though its play-bills—I mean the large ones—were familiar to me, and, I must own, rather tantalising. It was the Olympic, at the time of the famous 'Revels.' Madame Vestris, long and long before her marriage with Charles Mathews, was at the head of affairs then. Those bills had a charmingly bright look. There were always as many as four pieces every evening, and, I think, sometimes five. The titles, therefore, came pretty close together, and I remember they were printed alternately in red and green.

"Now Madame Vestris had an exceedingly good eye for colour; and she was one of those expensive and determined ladies who will have their way. Those reds and greens must have been something out of the common run of printers' ink, for at this distance of time I cannot look at a piece of decorative Mogador

furniture, a sort of open cabinet, quaintly painted, in the room where I write these words, without thinking of Madame Vestris's playbills. The lady, by-the-by, was heroine of some of the best stories likely to please a child, and I often fancied I should like to know her better than I ever had the chance of doing. One of these tales came from Norwich, where some elder relations of my father were living. As the story will perhaps be new to most, if not all of my readers, I may as well tell it.

"The lady was playing at the theatre of that ancient city, and there was a general disposition to encore her favourite song, 'Pray, Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue,' which she had been singing in 'Midas.' Opposition to the popular call was offered in a rudely strenuous manner from a private box, the sole occupant, who was a person of local importance, giving himself some very magisterial airs.

"However, the house was too strong for him, and the song was repeated. As soon as the singer came to the couplet,

" 'Remember when the judgment's weak,  
The prejudice is strong,'

she dwelt with retarded emphasis on the words, and, turning to the side box, dropped a charming little curtsey. The consequence was that she had to sing the song a third time, such was the unbounded delight of the audience."

Long before I had seen Madame Vestris on the stage, her name and face had been familiar to me through my mother's favourite song book, which was full of Vestris ballads, mostly with illustrated covers, on which I delighted to gaze as a child. One of my mother's pet



songs, and most certainly her children joined in her admiration of it, was "Buy a Broom." My head could scarcely have reached the keyboard of our old tall, lanky piano, which resembled in shape a cupboard with the front faced with fluted yellow silk, and drawn together in the centre with a large yellow silk button outlined with yellow gimp; whilst underneath the keyboard was another fluted front like a cupboard, to correspond with the top one.

The success of "Buy a Broom" dated as far back as 1827, when a play called "The Hundred Pound Note" was produced at Covent Garden. In it were Blanchard—E. L. Blanchard's father—Bartley, Tyrone Power, the famous Irish comedian—father of Harold Power, the genial entertainer—who was lost in that ill-fated ship *The President*—old Keeley, who played Billy Black (Boots), Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Faucit, and Madame Vestris. Keeley's catch phrase in this play was "D'ye give it up?" and it was instantly caught up by the town; and as to "Buy a Broom," the ballad sung by Madame Vestris in the character of Harriet Arlington, it was hummed by every one and became the rage.

"From Deutchland I come, with my light wares all laden,  
To dear, happy England, in summer's gay bloom;  
Then listen, fair lady, and young pretty maiden,  
Oh, buy of the wand'ring Bavarian a broom.

"Buy a broom, buy a broom! (*Spoken.*) Buy a broom!  
Oh, buy of the wand'ring Bavarian a broom!

"To brush away insects that sometimes annoy you,  
You'll find it quite handy to use night and day;  
And what better exercise, pray, can employ you,  
Than to sweep all vexatious intruders away?

"Buy a broom, &c.

" Ere winter comes on, for sweet home soon departing,  
 My toils for your favour again I'll resume ;  
 And, while gratitude's tear in my eyelid is starting,  
 Bless the time that in England I cried, Buy a broom !

" Buy a broom, &c.

(*Spoken*). " Yes, I shall go back to my own country, and no longer cry  
 Buy a broom ! but sing—

" O mein lieber Augustin, Augustin, Augustin,  
 O mein lieber Augustin alles' ist weg !  
 Bock ist weg,  
 Stock ist weg,  
 Auch ich bin in den dreck.  
 O mein lieber Augustin, alles' ist weg ! "

Madame Vestris was painted in the character of the Buy-a-Broom girl, modelled in plaster, and sold everywhere.

Eliza Lucy Bartolozzi, Madame Vestris, was born on the 3rd of January, 1797, in St. Marylebone, and was the granddaughter of the great engraver Bartolozzi. From her father's teaching, and that of the best masters, she became an excellent musician, as well as perfect in the French and Italian languages. She married, at the age of sixteen, Armand Vestris, a dancer at the Italian Opera—a most depraved, dissipated man of only twenty-four, who had already ruined his constitution—on the 28th of January, 1813, at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. She made her début as Proserpina in Winter's opera of "*Il Ratto di Proserpina*," on Thursday, the 20th of July, 1815, and achieved a most complete success, not only by the excellence of her singing, but by her beauty and charm of manner.

The young actress next appeared in Paris, both in comedy and tragedy, and returned to London in 1819, to appear as Lilla in "*The Siege of Belgrade*," on the 29th

of February, 1829. She made a marked success as the Don in "Giovanni in London," and her portraits in the character were all over the town. She could not, however, with all her popularity, turn "Giovanni in Ireland," an extravaganza full of the grossest improprieties, into a success. It was played on the 26th of December, 1821, and was withdrawn after a very stormy run of four nights. Her husband died in 1825 ; and, having created a most favourable impression in the provinces, she became manageress of the Olympic in 1831, and opened it on the 3rd of January, 1831, with "Mary Queen of Scots" and "Olympic Revels," written by Planché and Charles Dance.

This is Planché's description of the first success of Madame Vestris at the Olympic in 1831, and it is interesting to take note of it inasmuch as it is the prelude to the abandonment of late hours at the theatre and elsewhere. In fact, Planché in 1831 seems to have prophesied the "Early Closing Act."

"The new management at Drury Lane had declined to re-engage Madame Vestris ; and there being no opening for her at Covent Garden, she suddenly determined to set up for herself. Passing through Long Acre one day, I met her in her carriage. She stopped it, and informed me she had just taken the Olympic in conjunction with Miss Foote ; that they had engaged Mrs. Glover, and several other performers ; and would be glad if I had anything ready for immediate production and would assist them in any way by my advice or interest.

"I readily consented ; and remembering a classical burlesque I had written shortly after the production of 'Amoroso,' but could never get accepted at any theatre,

mentioned the subject to her ; and it was agreed that I should immediately make such alterations as time and circumstances had rendered necessary, and that she would open the season with it and in it.

"Having much work on my hands at the time, I induced Charles Dance, with whom I had already written a farce for the Haymarket, to try his hand at this style of composition : and, in two or three evenings, we brushed up together the oft-rejected burlesque, founded on George Colman the younger's story 'The Sun Poker,' and named by me 'Prometheus and Pandora'; and, under the additional locally-allusive title of 'Olympic Revels,' it was produced on the 3rd of January, 1831 (the opening night), Madame Vestris sustaining the part of Pandora. John Brougham was in the original cast ; he played Mars.

"The extraordinary success of this experiment—for it may justly so be termed—was due not only to the admirable singing and piquant performance of that gifted lady, but also to the charm of novelty imparted to it by the elegance and accuracy of the costume ; it having been previously the practice to dress a burlesque in the most outré and ridiculous fashion.

"My suggestion to try the effect of persons, picturesquely attired, speaking absurd doggerel, fortunately took the fancy of the fair lessee, and the alteration was highly appreciated by the public ; but many old actors could never get over their early impressions. Liston thought to the last that Prometheus, instead of wearing the Phrygian cap, tunic, and trousers, should have been dressed like a great lubberly boy in a red jacket and nankeens, with a pinafore all besmeared with lollipop !—a dress, by the way, in which he actually came to a child's party at my

house, and insisted in sitting on the lap of my dear old stepmother, who was a great favourite with him. It would be superfluous to say more on this subject than simply that 'Olympic Revels' was the first of a series which enjoyed the favour of the public for upwards of thirty years.

"A very unforeseen advantage was obtained by the manageress from a dilemma into which she was accidentally placed shortly after the opening, by the necessity arising for an alteration in the bill, which was at that time what is technically called 'a four-piece bill.'

"One of the four was a drama in two acts, entitled 'Mary Queen of Scots,' in which Miss Foote enacted the heroine. Its sudden removal, for some cause or other, occasioned the performances of that evening to terminate at eleven instead of twelve. Dance and I, going out with the crowd, heard several expressions of gratification at the prospect of getting home at a rational hour; and the fact favourably contrasted with the practice at other theatres of prolonging the performance till long past midnight, so that persons living at any distance could not possibly be in their beds before the small hours in the morning.

"The following day, therefore, when Madame Vestris consulted us as to what should be the programme for the following week, we advised her strongly to take advantage of the circumstance, and, instead of substituting any drama for the one withdrawn, to announce in the bills that the performances for the future would be so arranged as to terminate every evening as nearly as possible at eleven o'clock.

"Our advice was taken. The new arrangement gave general satisfaction, and continued during the whole

period of Madame Vestris' lesseeship, one of the many agreeable features that distinguished the Olympic Theatre.

"The lines in the finale to the 'Olympic Revels,'

" 'Since home at eleven you take yourselves,  
It cannot be said that you rake yourselves,'

were invariably received with applause as well as laughter by the audience.

"It ought surely to be a self-evident fact that nothing can be more injurious to a theatre than the exhaustion of the actors and the wearying of the public by the spinning out of the performances to so late an hour as is still too frequently the practice at more than one theatre.

"An anecdote of Liston amusingly illustrates the extent to which it was carried at the Haymarket in the days of Mr. Morris—the period of which I am writing. Mr. and Mrs. Liston were staying at the Ship Hotel, Dover. One day as Liston, returning from a walk, was passing through the hall, the landlord accosted him and begged he would do him the favour to step into his parlour, as there was a lady there who would feel much flattered by being permitted to renew her acquaintance with him.

"Liston, with some degree of curiosity, complied, and was introduced to the landlord's wife, who with many smiles and blushes expressed her fear that Mr. Liston would not recollect her. Liston confessed that he certainly could not call to mind that they had ever met before. Would she oblige him by refreshing his memory? 'Oh, Mr. Liston, I had the honour of acting with you one evening.' 'Indeed, madam! When and where?' 'Last season, at the Haymarket.'

“Liston was still oblivious, but a few more words explained the matter clearly. The lady, previous to her marriage, which had only recently taken place, had indulged a fancy to go on the stage, and had made her first appearance in a trifling part in the second act of a farce at the Haymarket at a quarter to one in the morning. As the farce had not been repeated, and Liston had never set eyes on her since, it was not particularly astonishing that his recognition of her was not instantaneous.

“Since that period a practice has arisen which is still more to be reprobated, the result to a certain degree of the former. No star or principal performer, whose position enables him or her to dictate terms to the manager, will now condescend to play in the last piece ; so some old worn-out farce, disgracefully mutilated to meet the circumstances, is hurried through anyhow by the unfortunate members of the company, who are compelled to work, some twenty yawning persons remaining in the house from mere idleness after the curtain has fallen on ‘the attraction of the evening.’

“It is impossible to protest too strongly against this custom—cruel to the poor actors, unjust to the author of the ill-treated farce, and disrespectful to the remnant of the audience, who, however few, have paid for their admission, and have a right to the best efforts of the establishment.”

Madame Vestris brought the Olympic Theatre up to a pitch of prosperity, and Charles Mathews having made his *début* here on the 7th of December, 1835, in his own farce of “The Humpbacked Lover,” in which he played George Rattleton, followed by Leman Rede’s farce, “The Old and Young Stager,” won her affections,

and they were married on the 18th of July, 1838, at Kensington Church, and immediately sailed for the United States; but their visit was not a success, and Madame Vestris made her reappearance at her own theatre, which had been managed during her absence by Planché, on the 2nd of January, 1839, as Fatima in "Blue Beard."

Her lesseeship came to an end on May 31st, and she commenced that of Covent Garden Theatre, on the 30th of September, 1839. This only lasted three years, and was unfortunate. She and Charles Mathews for a time joined Macready at Drury Lane, and then Webster at the Haymarket, remaining there till 1845. After a tour they appeared at the Princess's, in March, 1846.

In 1847 Madame Vestris became manageress of the Lyceum till the 26th of July, 1856, making her last appearance on that date in "Sunshine through the Clouds"; and it was during this term of years that those exquisite extravaganzas, "The King of the Peacocks," "The Island of Jewels," "Theseus and Ariadne," "The Golden Branch," &c., were produced.

Many hard things, never deservedly, have been said of Madame Vestris; but great allowances must be made for her. Had her first husband been a different man, she might have proved a very different woman; for, with all her follies, she was good-hearted, and did many acts of kindness. Her extravagance, however, was unbounded; she was known to have cut up a three-hundred guinea Indian shawl merely to use a portion of it for a turban and sash in "Oberon." She lies buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.

The mention of the "Game of Speculation," which



I must have seen at the Lyceum shortly after it was written in hot haste for Charles Mathews by George Henry Lewes, dramatic critic and philosopher, reminds me that this celebrated actor, the very essence of gaiety and geniality, could be extremely sensitive on questions affecting his acting and his art.

Balzac, before he died, wrote for the stage a thoroughly unactable five-act play, called "*Mercadet le Faiseur*": this was refused by the then director of the *Théâtre Français*. After Balzac's death, his five-act "*Mercadet*" was handed over to that unrivalled dramatic craftsman, D'Ennery, who died recently. D'Ennery reduced it to three acts, and produced it with the famous Geoffroy in the character of *Mercadet* at the *Gymnase*.

This version, by the brilliant and veteran dramatist, was translated by Lewes, written, rehearsed, and acted between Saturday and Monday, literally in sixty hours. The reason for such speed was that Benjamin Webster had his eye on "*Mercadet*" also, and Mathews wanted to be first in the field. This is probably the quickest bit of stage writing on record, and beats the speed of "*London Assurance*," by Dion Boucicault.

I do not think I took more than a week or ten days to prepare "*Peril*" for the Bancrofts, the second English version of "*Nos Intimes*" by Sardou. The first was called "*Friends or Foes*," adapted by Horace Wigan, and produced at the *St. James's* in 1862 by Miss Herbert.

"*The Game of Speculation*" remained one of the favourite plays of Charles Mathews throughout his long career, and he revived it again and again. It was a most admirable performance, and the character of *Mr. Affable Hawk* suited him to perfection. In later years *Mercadet*, created originally by Geoffroy, an actor

after the heart of Charles Mathews, whom he was never tired of quoting, became part of the répertoire of the Comédie Française, and the character fell to Got, a good actor no doubt, but one I always considered somewhat over-rated.

Got was best in "Le Gendre de M. Poirier"—far better, I venture to think, than Coquelin, who has played the part here recently at the Adelphi Theatre—and the "Duc Job"; but in that charming and idyllic poem, "La Joie fait Peur," known in English as "Sunlight through the Clouds," translated for Madame Vestris by George Henry Lewes, he could not approach Regnier, the original, an artist who is very high up on my list of the greatest actors I have ever seen.

Got had an awkward, and, to my mind, an inartistic habit of jerking up one shoulder and addressing the audience over the footlights. That trick, once so common with us, has been "improved altogether" here in England. After Got had appeared as Mercadet, an anonymous writer continually reminded Charles Mathews that Got was right and he was wrong in the reading of Balzac's "Mercadet," one treating the play seriously, the other farcically.

This annoyed Mathews, who was very punctilious on the point. At last, having been continually chaffed on the subject, he liberated his soul and let off the steam in a very serious letter indeed, addressed to the editor of the *Observer*.

Charles Mathews was successful all over the world, and wherever he appeared, in London, the provinces, America, Australia, everywhere—even at the Sandwich Islands! When his delightful and devoted wife "Mrs. Charley" died, her son gave me a very interesting playbill, coloured dark blue and in a gold frame.

The contents of this strange bill are as follows :—

# ROYAL HAWAIIAN THEATRE.

CHARLES DERBY—Proprietor and Manager.

BY COMMAND AND IN PRESENCE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING!

The Celebrated Comedian,

CHARLES MATHEWS,

Will perform

FOR THIS NIGHT ONLY, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1871.

The Evening's Entertainment will Commence with BLANCHARD JERROLD'S  
Favourite Farce of

COOL AS A CUCUMBER.

Played in French by Mr Charles Mathews for upwards of 30 Nights at  
the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris, under the title of

UN ANGLAIS TIMIDE.

<i>Plumper</i> (his original character)	Mr Charles Mathews.
<i>Old Barlins</i>	Mr. J Neill
<i>Miss Bessie Houton</i>	Miss St Clair
<i>Mary Wiggins</i>	Miss Post

To Conclude with Mr CHARLES MATHEWS' Farce of

PATTER VERSUS CLATTER

<i>Captain Latter</i> (a gentleman who allows no one to talk but himself)	Mr Charles Mathews.
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Admission—Reserved seats, \$2; Dress Circle; \$1.50, Parquette, \$1; Pit, 75c.;

Doors open at half past 7, Performance commences at 8 o'clock.

Charles Mathews could be very serious and earnest when he liked. One of the last conversations I ever had with him was at the Beefsteak Club, when he rather took me to task—of course in a fatherly way—for altering the tone of Octave Feuillet's "Le Village" in my version called "The Vicarage," which I had arranged for the Bancrofts, and which gave Mrs. Bancroft the character of the sweet silver-haired vicar's wife, a part she has often told me she loved as much as any she ever played.

Her favourite characters were Naomi Tighe, Lady



CHARLES MATTHEWS.  
(In his Entertainment at the Bijou Theatre, Haymarket.)



Teazle, Lady Franklin, and Mrs. Haygarth. To have acted this last part better, with more exquisite pathos, or more tender simplicity, would have been impossible. Of this quite perfect performance James Anderson, the stalwart legitimate actor, wrote to Mrs. Bancroft on the 3rd of May, 1877, from the Garrick Club.

"DEAR MRS. BANCROFT,—Pray do me the favour to accept an old actor's warmest felicitations on your beautiful rendering of the parson's wife in 'The Vicarage.' A more perfect bit of quiet acting I have never witnessed. You must believe me sincere when I tell you that it moved me even to tears—the delicate harmony of comedy and pathos awakened me to surprise and admiration. Having gratified my love for legitimate acting so much you will not, I trust, refuse to accept the sincere and appreciative thanks of,

"Yours very faithfully,

"JAMES ANDERSON."

Mrs. Bancroft has also recorded her impression of old Mrs. Haygarth in this little play.

"When I played the vicar's wife I had to deliver a particular speech which always affected me deeply—'God gave me a little child; but then, when all was bright and beautiful, God took His gift away,' &c. The remembrance of the death of my own child was revived in these words. My mind was full of his image, and my tears came in tribute to his memory. I could not have stopped them if I had tried. The effect upon my audience was that not a heart amongst them did not feel with me. Their silence spoke volumes, and their tears told me of their sympathy."

This is, of course, a very valuable contribution to the

old Talma-Diderot discussion about real versus assumed feeling on the stage, which, not so very long ago, was so brilliantly continued by Coquelin the elder and Henry Irving.

Notwithstanding all this, Mathews insisted that I had turned on the sentimental stop too forcibly. He objected to these "tears, idle tears." He preferred the first version by George Henry Lewes, called "A Cosy Couple," produced by Madame Vestris, in which he played the wanderer who attempts to lure away his "stay-at-home" old friend, Frank Matthews.

It is perfectly true that the scenic splendours of the stage have increased wonderfully in the last fifty years, mainly owing to the advance in the science of the stage, electric lighting and stage mechanism generally. Just as Henry Irving's superb mounting of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," with its Sicilian Cathedral, copied from one that attracted his artistic fancy in Messina, was relatively more magnificent and costly than such glorious productions by Charles Kean as "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," and "The Winter's Tale"; so such exquisite things in stage art as "The Geisha," and "The Greek Slave," by George Edwardes at Daly's Theatre, distanced the glories of Telbin as seen in the Vestris Lyceum days in the form of extravaganza by Planché.

Still, for all that, the stage scenes, and illusions of our childhood, are not to be destroyed. The present cannot wholly efface the past. I retain Lyceum visions of flowers that grew and expanded from bud to blossom, discovering, as the petals unfolded, the loveliest of girls led to the dance by Rosina Wright. In addition to Madame Vestris, who was said at that time to have been enamelled, but who, to my childish eyes, was a

perfect dream of loveliness, as indeed was her companion, Miss Julia St. George, I can recall old Frank Matthews and his comical wife, Bland a famous comedian, always called "Papa Bland" at the Strand, and many more now passed away in the hush of that last long sleep.

The mention of James Anderson reminds me that he was the first legitimate actor I ever saw in what I call a regular play. Pantomimes and extravaganzas were all very well ; but I pined for a play with a story in it, and with real actors and actresses who were serious. Anderson—then a very handsome man and always a fine actor—had at the beginning of the fifties taken Drury Lane, but I fear it turned out a disastrous speculation. Previous to that, he had been with Macready at the same theatre, and was one of the famous cast of "As You Like It," which is worth quoting as an example of a grand combination.

<i>Jaques</i> . . . . .	W. C. Macready.
<i>Orlando</i> . . . . .	James Anderson.
<i>Adam</i> . . . . .	Samuel Phelps.
<i>Touchstone</i> . . . . .	Robert Keeley.
<i>William</i> . . . . .	Henry Compton.
<i>Pages</i> . . . . .	Priscilla Horton
	(Mrs. German Reed).
<i>Foresters</i> . . . . .	Miss Gould.
	Sims Reeves.
<i>Duke Frederic</i> . . . . .	Stretton.
	John Ryder
	(first appearance).
<i>Rosalind</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Nesbitt.
<i>Celia</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Stirling.
<i>Phoebe</i> . . . . .	Miss Phillips.
<i>Audrey</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Keeley.

I suppose I was entitled to crow a bit in the school-room when it was settled by the authorities down below that I was to be taken "all by my little lonesome," as



they say, to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in the year 1849, to see James Anderson and Miss Vandenhoff in "The Lady of Lyons."

Hitherto I had been to the play in a kind of family circle, one of a crowd; but on this occasion it was to be a treat special to myself. My guardians and mentors were a member of the Stock Exchange, who sang bass in my father's choir—Tom Jackson—and one of my father's curates—George Rose, whose writings and entertainments long after were popular under the name of "Arthur Sketchley"; so you will see that the Church and the stage were not so very widely separated even fifty years ago. The theatrical treat had been planned out and most elaborately arranged by my kindly mentors, who loved to delight a little lad. Think what we might do all of us to-day if we did the same in a generous and unselfish spirit! My memory of this delightful evening has lasted for over fifty years!

They were determined to do the thing in style, and to start me on my vicious course of playgoing with all due honours. Before going to the play I was to be taken to a City chop house, one of the oldest in London, and so on to "Old Drury."

When I was being prepared for this delightful and festive evening's entertainment by the nursery governess, to whom I was deeply attached because she apparently understood my peculiarly sensitive nature, and soothed the susceptibilities of a dreamy, sentimental little child, I must have astonished her by a very strange question. I was thinking and pondering over the words I had heard, "The Lady of Lyons," lost "in the seventh heaven of delight and anticipation," as this kindly and generous woman would have described me, as I stood a victim prepared to be curled and combed, when I sud-

denly interrupted her in the process of hair-brushing, standing as I was on a chair, with this remark :

"I wonder if I shall be very frightened when she gets into the cage?"

"The cage, my dear? What cage? I know nothing about a cage! You are going to the play!"

To which I replied, looking up at her with an astonished expression, somewhat vexed, no doubt, at my interrupted thoughts:

"What cage? Why, the Lady of *Lions*!"

I imagined Pauline was a female Van Amburgh!

I had before that been taken to see the last of the Bartholomew Fairs, which, having been driven away by the City magnates from Smithfield Market, had settled down for a brief space at the Britannia Fields, close by our home at Hoxton. There, after the procession which passed our house in the New North Road,—and it was something like a procession in those days,—I had seen a never-to-be-forgotten show, with its gingerbread tents and its gilt and gingerbread cocks, hens, cats, and animals galore; its "wheels of fortune,"—how I loved them!—its Richardson's Show; its parade of players, all in costume with ceaseless drumming and fifeing; its waxworks, tight-rope dancing, sparring booths, and all the fun of the fair, including of course Wombwell's Menagerie, and the lovely lady all spangles and tarlatan skirts, who went into the den of lions protected only by a smart riding whip.

This was an actual and personal impression of one of the very last of the old London fairs when Bartlemy Fair was on the threshold of death, and before Greenwich Fair, with its revelry, recklessness, and down-hill rolling, had quite expired. The second cause of my connecting Bulwer Lytton's play with a menagerie was the daily

study of the picture posters advertising the glories of the Surrey Zoological Gardens, where, after sampling the lions and tigers, perched on some kindly shoulders, I had seen amidst a blaze of fireworks such exciting shows as "The Storming of Badajoz" and "Napoleon Crossing the Alps."

I have small doubt that the Napoleon on that occasion was the famous Gomersal, who obtained an enormous reputation at Astley's and elsewhere from his remarkable likeness to the First Consul. But there have been many stage Napoleons since then. Harry Jackson was in appearance, when "made up," Napoleon to the life, priding himself on the likeness; and so would Murray Carson be, if he ever appeared in a Napoleon play such as "Madame Sans-Gêne."

Gomersal, when an obscure actor, was out of an engagement, which was not unfrequently the case with him, and happening to call in at the "Tankard," a favourite theatrical tavern in the Kennington Road, he there met the proprietor of Astley's, who was much struck with his likeness to the first Napoleon. As it happened, the play of the "Battle of Waterloo" was then in rehearsal, and about to be produced the next night; but the management was in some difficulty owing to the very serious illness of the principal actor, who was to play Buonaparte.

In this dilemma, the manager approached Gomersal, and asked him if he could undertake the part at such a short notice. Gomersal was in very low water, and would have agreed to study any new part by the next night; he readily embraced the manager's offer, and set to work to study the lines at once. However, when the next evening arrived, he was very far from being letter-perfect; and in this

difficulty he bethought himself of a snuff-box which he possessed among his properties, which he agreed with the prompter should be the medium for signalling, and that when he required assistance he would tap it and take snuff.

Of course there are other celebrated plays in which a snuff-box plays a very important part, notably in "Robert Macaire," who uses a squeaking snuff-box to frighten the wretched Jacques Strop. This wheeze was invented by Frédéric Lemaître, when, in order to save a serious play from disaster, he turned it into a grotesque one.

The first time that Gomersal tried the trick it was warmly applauded by the audience, and having to be frequently repeated, he found that on each occasion it was good for a round; hence on the subsequent productions the snuff-box was always made a prominent "acting part," and it never failed to meet with popular recognition.

It will be guessed, therefore, how the idea of a menagerie got mixed up in my little brain when I was told that I was to see "The Lady of Lyons." But when I was safe in the pit of the theatre, all eagerness and attention, I soon discovered that the lovely Miss Vandenhoff was a legitimate actress of the first order, and had no affinity to any female or French Van Amburgh.

Away then I went in the late afternoon to the City with the theatre-loving stockbroker and the curate, who afterwards, having joined another Church and become a layman again, turned entertainer himself, and under the name of "Arthur Sketchley" delighted all London at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, with a show called "Mrs. Brown at the Play," and, oh! how often he had amused us all as children with the self-same story in

the old Hoxton days ! He was the most fascinating companion for child, boy, or man, that ever existed, full of anecdote and the soul of fun, a classical scholar and a rare conversationalist.

He it was who took me first to see Albert Smith in his capital Mont Blanc and Overland Route entertainments.

I can well recall, even at this distance of time, the entertainments of Albert Smith at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, particularly the ascent of Mont Blanc, and the visit to China. There is no doubt that Albert Smith did ascend Mont Blanc, and at a time when the ascent was far more difficult than it is to-day. They say "he was dragged up to the top somehow." At any rate his account of the trip was vastly amusing. The room in which Albert Smith lectured looked to me, so far as decorations were concerned, like a Swiss chalet. The entertainer came out of a side door, like a cuckoo out of a Swiss clock, perched himself in a corner, played popular tunes at a spinet, recounted his journey towards Switzerland on a Rhine steamer, and made us all roar with his intensely comic description of the stories of the engineer with his grievances and his eternal pipe.

Albert Smith died on the 23rd of May, 1860, on the day that Thormanby won the Derby and I started life as a Government clerk in the War Office, Pall Mall. He was born at Chertsey, on the 24th of May, 1816, and was educated at Merchant Taylor's. He was intended to follow his father's profession as a surgeon, and studied medicine at Middlesex Hospital and at Paris, and commenced work in 1837 with his father. He soon turned to literary pursuits, and contributed articles to the *Mirror*, *Medical Times*, &c. Albert Smith wrote several dramas, burlesques, and novels—his "Wassail

Bowl," "Adventures of Mr. Ledbury," "Scattergood Family," "Marchioness of Brinvilliers," "Pottleton Legacy," and "Christopher Tadpole," were all successes. He also wrote a series of clever sketches on various classes of London society. In 1858, he produced his "Overland Route"; in 1852, March 15th, his "Mont Blanc," which ran till 1858 at the Egyptian Hall. He married Miss Marie Keeley, on the 1st of August, 1859.

After George Rose had ceased his duties as private tutor to the present Duke of Norfolk, we met again in Bohemia Land; we contributed together to *Fun*, when under the editorship of Tom Hood; we dined together at the tables of celebrated actors and literary men; we belonged to the same clubs, and never parted until a sudden death separated us, and I followed my beloved friend to his grave in the Catholic churchyard at Fulham, where he rests, please God, in peace.

George Rose, the nephew of the famous Sir George Rose, a wit of the first order, was just the right sort of man to take a boy to the play for the first time and introduce him to an old-world City chop house. He had been on the Stock Exchange before he took orders in the Church of England, and was certainly the most unorthodox clergyman I had ever met. He could sing, play the piano, tell excellent stories, exhilarate us with Scotch ballads about "Bonnie Prince Charlie," depress us with crooning laments such as "Little Wee Crooden Doo," and he played the fool generally with a superiority I have never before or since seen equalled. When he was caught dancing or pirouetting round our dining-room by his vicar—my father—the only greeting he got was, "Don't be such a fool, Rose!" But we all idolised him, for he was a Bohemian at heart, and in after years he managed frequently to sneak

some of us off to the opera, play, or a lively entertainment of some sort or other.

The City was not so far off our house—down Pitfield Street, past Aske's Hospital, where, at the Chaplain's house, I have spent many a happy day in the old gardens—along the Vinegar Yard, City Road, opposite St. Luke's Lunatic Asylum. Vinegar Yard remains pretty much the same to-day as it was then, except that there are no sellers of Catnach ballads or curious songs exhibited on a kind of screen, against the blank brick wall. But in those days there was a turnpike gate close to the Vinegar Yard; and you could not get to Finsbury Pavement, where William Gull and the doctors lived, and the Battys sold pickles; and Cater and Co. sold haberdashery, and a Mr. Morgan or Prothero pulled out our teeth, and a Mr. Dyer had livery stables, without paying toll in the City Road.

It must have been Dolly's Chop House in the City to which I was taken that afternoon or evening as a preliminary to seeing "The Lady of Lyons" at "Old Drury." I remember it was up a court, and just inside the door of the chop house was a huge cupboard, such as you see even now in the courtyard of an old fashioned English inn. This glass cupboard was stocked with the most presentable raw chops and steaks that the eye ever rested on, all neatly trimmed, pared, and ready for cooking. The customer or guest arriving at Dolly's was greeted by a cook in a snow-white cap and apron, holding a fork, with which the visitor promptly speared the chop or steak that took his fancy, and then and there he transferred his prize to another cook stationed at the "grid," who, according to instruction, grilled the delicate morsels

under your nose. So you see that the open Spiers and Pond grill was only a revival of old chop-house customs of the late forties.

The repast was enjoyed in cosy boxes, with oyster sauce of the very best; and the good brown stout or London porter in polished pewters were draughts to be remembered. Sometimes the City men sat late in chop houses over a bottle of port wine or old Madeira, such as the London clubs had stored and binned in their cellars before "strangers' rooms" drank up what was laid down for the community; but, as a rule, a chop or steak and a tankard of ale, stout, or half and half, was quite good enough for the playgoers of moderate days.

I should like to give you some idea of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, when I first saw it in 1849. Very little luxury; no lounging stalls; the pit right up to the orchestra; the faithful pittites sitting on hard benches, and constantly disturbed between the acts by women with huge and clumsy baskets filled with apples, oranges, nuts, ginger beer, bottled stout and bills of the play, which they offered to the public in shrill, discordant voices—the very descendants of Nell Gwynne herself. The programmes—or bills—were no fashionably Rimmel-scented or artistically decorated things in those times; but long sheets of thinnish paper, vilely printed with bad ink which never seemed to dry, and that soiled the fingers and was ruination to gloves. There was a green baize curtain; and in the event of a tragedy such as, for instance, "The Iron Chest," a green baize carpet, for it was considered unorthodox and a theatrical crime to play a tragedy without a carpet of green baize.

So much for the rough, uncouth disadvantages. But,



on the other side of the picture, such a rapt attention on the part of the audience as I have never discovered since. No chattering, no conversation, no blasé or indifferent tones, no breaks in interest between the actor and the audience—caused by that fatal diversion of late dining and late arriving “stalls”—and the ever hungry pit; but an electric communication from the stage to the auditorium.

“Give me the days when I played to the pit,” said Charles Mathews again and again to me. “The stalls are profitable, but the pit was pulsating!”

It was here among these apples, oranges, ginger-beer bottles and inky bills of the play that I first saw “The Lady of Lyons.”

They gave you enough for your money in those days of old, for Bulwer Lytton’s play was followed by a pantomime called “Harlequin Good Queen Bess,” a kind of burlesque of Sir Walter Scott’s “Kenilworth.” Of this I remember Queen Elizabeth’s bright red head. She was of course played by the low comedian; and for Leicester there was a parody on a famous nigger song of those days, “Oh, Susannah, don’t you cry for me! I’m goin’ to Alabama with a banjo on my knee!”

It was a grand sight, and I have never forgotten it. I can see at this distance of time the scene between Pauline and Claude when they arrive at the Widow Melnotte’s humble home; I can hear Miss Vandenhoff’s curse and James Anderson’s humiliation; I was as impressed then as I am now with the fact that pride must have a fall, and all must come right in the end if you only wait.

But which, you will ask, impressed the child-spectator most—Bland as the Earl of Leicester with a comic song,

Queen Elizabeth with a red wig undressing behind a screen, or the story of the proud beauty of Lyons and the gardener's son? Sentiment won! The pantomime went by the board! "The Lady of Lyons" sealed my fate, and I have never forgotten or deserted my first love.

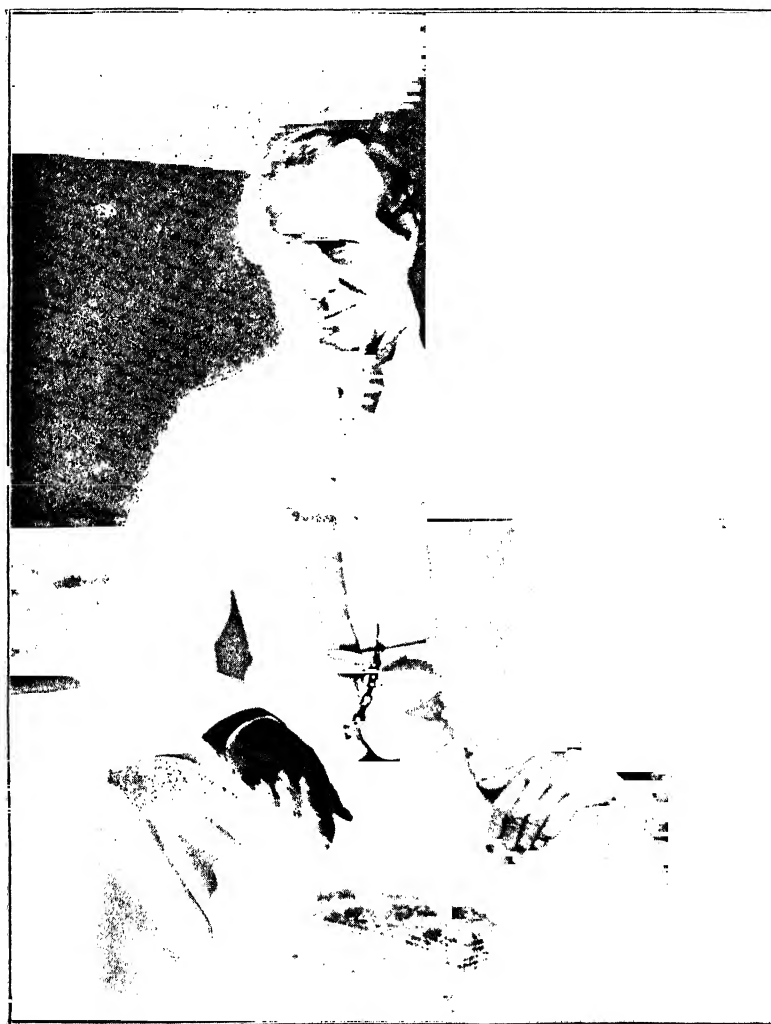
## CHAPTER V

### "SADLER'S WELLS AND SAMUEL PHELPS,"

THE recollections of old Sadler's Wells must ever be very dear to me ; for there, in the year 1850, I saw my first Hamlet, and that Hamlet was Samuel Phelps.

Many of my father's parishioners and friends were staunch admirers of the gallant upholder of the so-called "legitimate drama," who was making such a brave fight for Shakespeare and the classical drama up in merry Islington. Again and again they dinned into my juvenile ears stories of the glory of Mrs. Warner and Miss Addison and Miss Glyn—who joined Phelps in 1848, making her début as Volumnia—and George Bennett and Mr. and Mrs. Marston and Hoskins, Belford, Frederick Robinson, and many more.

At last I persuaded one of these devoted admirers of Samuel Phelps to beg for the parental consent to take me to Sadler's Wells, to see "Hamlet" for the first time. I have never been one of those who declare, without thinking very deeply on the subject, that Shakespeare is for the study, and not for the stage. I do not believe it is possible to be thoroughly impressed with Shakespeare until you have seen his plays acted. Long before I had witnessed the majority of these masterpieces on the stage, I had studied Shakespeare, I had read and re-read



SAMUEL PHELPS.



Shakespeare, I had been taught the meaning of Shakespeare. I had attended Shakespearean readings, Shakespearean discourses and Shakespearean lectures; but I never thoroughly understood "the bard" as he is called, until I saw him acted in those always-to-be-remembered days with Phelps at Sadler's Wells, with Charles Kean, and Foote, and Stella Golas and Walter Montgomery at the old Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street; with certain stars fitfully twinkling out of the Drury Lane firmament; with John Hollingshead's laudable Shakespearean efforts at the Gaiety of all places in the world; and, of course, with Henry Irving, Edwin Booth, Ellen Terry, Mary Anderson, and Forbes Robertson at the Lyceum.

It may be that we are not always apt sufficiently to credit how much of the unrivalled fame of Shakespeare is due to the fact that his work was chiefly devoted to the stage, where for three centuries and more it has been continuously illustrated—portrayed by the greatest actors, and thus, not unfrequently, first made known to the multitude. What source other than the theatre could so long and effectually advertise the achievement of genius?

It is a trite saying, but a true one, that you always think your first Hamlet is the best, or at any rate that the favourable opinion of your first Prince of Denmark is not easily eradicated. On this account many indifferent Hamlets—not to say Romeos, Othellos, Shylocks, Ophelias, Juliets and Desdemonas,—get the credit from youthful critics for virtues they do not sometimes possess.

Not very long ago I was severely taken to task in an important book that professed to tell the story of the stage, but did nothing of the kind, for being so very

dictatorial in my opinions regarding the acting of Shakespeare's most important characters. I was asked why I did not like the Juliet or the Ophelia or the Lady Macbeth of Madame So and So ; and was informed that every performance she attempted was quite good enough, if not for me, for the majority of the critics of to-day. A pistol was, so to speak, held at my innocent head, and I was commanded to explain what on earth I meant by saying that the Hamlet, or the Othello, or the Macbeth, or the Iago, of Messrs. So and So, fell short of absolute perfection. My answer was and is an obvious one. Because I happen to have seen far superior acting in these particular characters from celebrated actors and actresses of other days.

I don't suppose that I am ever likely to see a better Hamlet than Fechter or Henry Irving ; a better Ophelia than the sisters Kate and Ellen Terry and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree ; a better Juliet than Stella Colas and Adelaide Neilson ; a better Othello than Salvini ; a better Iago than Fechter, Edwin Booth, and Irving ; a better Shylock than Irving in certain scenes ; or a better Buckingham and Hotspur than Forbes Robertson and Lewis Waller. An ideal Romeo has never yet crossed my dramatic path, but I hope to find him yet. The best Romeo that I have seen so far was a girl, and a very clever one—Miss Esmé Beringer, an ideal Italian love-sick youth. I am not in accord with those critics who say that Shakespeare ought to have turned in his grave in the chancel of the old church at Stratford-on-Avon when Sarah Bernhardt came to play Hamlet in Shakespeare's birthplace. This great genius gave a reading of the part singularly beautiful, clever, convincing, and always impressive. The following is the cast of my first "Hamlet" at old Sadler's Wells in 1850.

## "HAMLET."

<i>The King</i> . . . . .	George Bennett.
<i>Hamlet</i> . . . . .	Samuel Phelps.
<i>Polonius</i> . . . . .	A. Younge.
<i>Laertes</i> . . . . .	Waller.
<i>Osric</i> . . . . .	Hoskins.
<i>Horatio</i> . . . . .	Dolman.
<i>Marcellus</i> . . . . .	Graham.
<i>Rosencrantz</i> . . . . .	Wheatleigh.
<i>Guildenstern</i> . . . . .	C. Fenton.
<i>First Gravedigger</i> . . . . .	F. Younge.
<i>Second Gravedigger</i> . . . . .	Williams.
<i>Ghost</i> . . . . .	H. Mellon.
<i>First Actor</i> . . . . .	Knight.
<i>Second Actor</i> . . . . .	Franks.
<i>Gertrude</i> . . . . .	Miss Glyn.
<i>Ophelia</i> . . . . .	Miss Travers.

When Samuel Phelps first became the lessee of Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1844, his principal partner was a celebrated actress named Mrs. Warner—no relation at all to our Charles Warner of the present period, although his father was at one time a member of the Sadler's Wells company, playing then under his own name of Lickfold.

Mary Amelia Warner was born at Manchester in 1804, and died on the 24th of September, 1854. She was the daughter of Huddart, the actor; and, as Miss Huddart, she began her dramatic career, when only fifteen years of age, with Brunton, the manager of the Plymouth, Exeter, Bristol, and Birmingham Theatres. Her first notable appearance in London was as Belvidera in "Venice Preserved," at Drury Lane, on the 22nd of November, 1830, to Macready's Pierre, though she had already played at some of the minor theatres in town. Lady Constance in "King John," Alicia in "Jane Shore," Emma in "William Tell," and Queen Elswith in "Alfred the Great or the Patriot King," were her principal



characters that season. In 1836 she was at Drury Lane again, under Bunn's management, and played Lady Macbeth, Emilia, and Marian in "The Wrecker's Daughter." In 1837, Evadne in "The Bridal" (The Maid's Tragedy) at the Haymarket. In the same year she married Robert William Warner, landlord of the Wrekin Tavern, in Broad Court. Mrs. Warner was for some four years a member of Macready's company at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and in 1844 entered into partnership with Phelps at Sadler's Wells, remaining there till 1847, when she became the manageress of the Marylebone, and opened in October as Hermione in "The Winter's Tale." The management proved a disastrous one; and so Mrs. Warner returned to the Haymarket (having already played there a couple of seasons between 1837 and 1844), and appeared at Sadler's Wells for a limited number of nights, and made her last bow on the English boards as Mrs. Oakley in "The Jealous Wife." Mrs. Warner subsequently went once to America, but returned home in 1853, a confirmed invalid; she left a son and a daughter to mourn for her.

Mrs. Warner's son appeared as Hamlet at the "Wells" for his father's benefit in August, 1866, but he made very little impression with his performance of the unhappy Dane. This was John Lawrence Warner. He was described as having a tall, graceful figure, fine forehead, and most expressive features. On this occasion Miss Neville was the Ophelia; W. Roberts the King; Mr. Jacques, Laertes; and Brunton the Grave-digger. How theatrical names repeat themselves in the history of the stage! We have had many Nevilles and Bruntons.

Before I dismiss Mrs. Warner from the scene, I must

quote Professor Henry Morley's description of the unfortunate end of this gifted woman, taken from his valuable "*Journal of a London Playgoer*," which ranges from 1851 to 1866, and, having recently been accurately indexed, is an extremely good guide to the stage of that day. It will be seen that poor Mrs. Warner had the personal sympathy and generous assistance of our gracious Majesty the Queen, who, as we all know, was once a most enthusiastic playgoer herself, and ever a warm and devoted friend to the players themselves.

"One of the most distinguished and respected of our actresses, who has for years maintained her family by her exertions, was the other day subjected to the distress of appearing, through her husband, in the Insolvent Debtors' Court. It appeared that for some time she had been afflicted by the growth of a most painful disease, in spite of which, while strength remained, she laboured actively in her profession. Compelled at last to desist, the pains of poverty might have been felt not less sharply than the pains of sickness, had not friends been at hand to deprive them of their sting. The proceedings in the Debtors' Court disclosed only truths that come home to us all. They told us that an intellectual and high-spirited woman had supported herself and her children by laborious exertion in the highest department of dramatic art—that by the rapid growth of a terrible disease she had been checked in her career—and that this deprived her, as it would deprive any one among the millions of her countrymen and countrywomen—of the means of fulfilling the moderate and reasonable engagements formed in days of health. All that it told us more than that was of the human sympathies awakened by the case. We

cannot say of such a reverse that it suggests charity, using the word in its cold modern sense. But it arouses sympathies, and it enables those who stand about to claim a privilege of ministering by kind offices to a most sacred grief.

“Kind offices, thus done in secret, have, through the investigation in the Insolvent Court, been forced into publicity. We should not speak of them if we had not been made to see that there was one gentle hand among those ready to smooth the pillow of the sinking actress, which Englishmen are always proud to recognise, and never yet have found stretched out for any evil work. Not only have fellow-artists gathered about Mrs. Warner, but some others who, as the world knows, are never absent when a kind word is to be said, or a kindly act done; and by accident the Queen’s name slipped into the narrative. Among other indications of the great respect in which the sick lady is held, it appeared that Her Majesty had not been content with simply subscribing towards the support required by Mrs. Warner’s family, now that its prop fails—but that, having learnt the importance of carriage exercise to the patient, with a woman’s delicacy at once found the kindest way to render service, by herself hiring a carriage, which she has caused, and causes still, to be placed daily at Mrs. Warner’s disposal.

“It is properly in the nature of acts like this to remain unknown to the world, and it is with reserve and misgiving one gives to so graceful a private action more publicity than it already has. Yet surely gentle qualities which no possessor would parade, we are bound to recognise, and are entitled to admire, in one another. Her Majesty makes few state visits to the English theatres. Chance has disclosed, however, how the

actor's art may be more surely honoured, by a courtesy more womanly and quite as royal."

The notable Shakespearean scheme of Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells Theatre has been admirably described and written in the "Life and Work of Samuel Phelps" by his nephew, May Phelps, and John Forbes Robertson, the illustrious father of several celebrated actors. The pronouncement of Samuel Phelps and Mrs. Warner is extremely valuable and interesting to the playgoers of to-day, for it will be seen that nearly half a century ago the "suburban theatre" was deliberately anticipated; the stock company was vigorously supported; and "free trade in the drama" was enthusiastically advocated. And yet there are people who do not hesitate to say that the moderns have done more for the literary drama than the ancients. This theory can scarcely be supported by fact, as I hope to prove. Society in any case seems to have played a game of "pull devil pull baker."

It was shortly after the close of his last engagement in the spring of 1844 that Samuel Phelps conceived the idea with his friend Mrs. Warner of becoming, jointly with T. L. Greenwood, and her husband, lessee of the Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, which was opened under the management of Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps, the latter being stage manager, on the Whit Monday of that year.

Mr. Phelps now commenced his great life work—which was to continue for over eighteen years; and in these eighteen years he put, as Tom Taylor said after his death, a whole life. The following address was issued.

"Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps embark in the

management and performance of Sadler's Wells Theatre in the hope of eventually rendering it, what a theatre ought to be—a place for justly representing works of our great dramatic poets. This undertaking commences at a time when the stages which have been exclusively called 'National' are closed or devoted to very different objects from that of presenting the real drama of England, and when the law has placed all theatres upon an equal footing of security and respectability, leaving no difference—except in the object and conduct of the management. These circumstances justify the notion, that each separate division of our immense metropolis, with its two million of inhabitants, may have its own well-conducted theatre, within a reasonable distance of its patrons.

“For the north of London they offer an entertainment selected from the first stock dramas in the world, reinforced by such novelties as can be procured by diligence and liberality, intending that the quality of their novelties will constantly improve, as time will be given to procure and prepare them; and a company of acknowledged talent playing such characters as they must be called upon to sustain at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were those houses now devoted to the drama.

“The attractions are placed in a theatre where all can see and hear, at a price fairly within the habitual means of all.

“They commence under the disadvantage of very short preparation, and they are aware that some errors and deficiencies are inseparable from such a circumstance; they trust that their names are a sufficient guarantee for the honest endeavour to deserve further patronage, and they promise that the trust of the public and its en-

couragement shall be met by continual zeal and liberality, increasing constantly with the means of showing it. They will endeavour to confirm what may be found satisfactory, supply what may be at first deficient, and above all exalt the entertainments to meet the good taste of the audience. Stage Manager, Mr. Phelps; Acting Manager, Mr. T. L. Greenwood; Treasurer, Mr. Warner."

The opening performance was "Macbeth," thus cast in the principal characters.

"MACBETH."

<i>Macbeth</i> . . . . .	Mr. Phelps.
<i>Banquo</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Lacey.
<i>Macduff</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Marston.
<i>Rosse</i> . . . . .	Mr. Aldridge.
<i>Sivard</i> . . . . .	Mr. Graham.
<i>Lady Macbeth</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Warner.
<i>Hecate</i> . . . . .	Mr. Clement White.
<i>The Three Witches</i> . . . . .	Mr. Forman, Mr. Wilson ' and Mr. Morelli.
<i>First and second Singing Witches</i>	Miss Lebatt and Miss Emma Harding.

In the course of the evening an occasional address, written by Thomas James Serle, a famous dramatist of that time, was spoken by Mrs. Warner.

Thomas James Serle was born on the 28th of October, 1799, and was intended for the Bar. Before he was eighteen years of age, he had written four five-act plays. He then joined the stage, and played Romeo at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, to Vandenhoff's Mercutio. He also appeared as Hamlet in the provinces, and at the Regency, Tottenham Court Road, and the old Royalty Theatres, where he produced a five-act play. He was the author of several plays: "Raffael Cimaro" (1819), "Fulvius Valcus" (1823), "Walthof the Saxon," played at Exeter; "The Parricide," five acts, at Dover, the theatre of

which town he managed for a couple of years. He played at Boulogne in 1824, Brussels in 1825, and, returning to England, was engaged for Covent Garden for lead in legitimate business during three seasons, and played with Edmund Kean, Young, Charles Kemble, &c. He adapted "Dominique," "Victim of St. Vincent" and "The Man in the Iron Mask"; he was a strong supporter of the movement made to abolish the monopoly of the patent houses. Among other plays with which his name is associated are "The Merchant of London" and "The House of Coburg," produced at Drury Lane, 1832. He was one of the original founders and honorary secretary of the Dramatic Authors' Society. "The Yeoman's Daughter," Adelphi, 1832; "The Ghost Story," Adelphi, 1833; "The Shadow on the Wall," and "The Widow Queen," Lyceum, 1835; "The Witch's Son," and "Master Clarke," Haymarket, 1840; "The Priest's Daughter," 1840, Sadler's Wells; "A Village Story," and "Tender Precautions," Princess's—were also among his works.

He also wrote several prologues; in 1834, he was stage manager of the English Opera, Lyceum Theatre; he lectured on Shakespeare throughout the country, and was acting manager and reader at Covent Garden in 1837. He wrote the novels "The Players" and "Joan of Arc," and four more five-act plays, which he read as lectures: "The Proscribed," "The Jacquerie," "The Queen and the Minister" and "Gaston de Foix." He also translated and adapted some Italian plays. Serle married Cecilia, daughter of Vincent Novello, the composer, sister of Mrs. Cowden Clarke and Clara Novello, afterwards Countess Gigliucci.

The theatre at Sadler's Wells on the opening night when "Macbeth" was played was crammed to suffo-

cation, and the following notice appeared in the *Athenæum*.

"The announcement we made last week will sufficiently explain the unwonted circumstance of our noticing either the 'doings or pretences' of this almost forgotten theatre. The altered state of the law permits now the legal performance of a five-act drama everywhere, so that the distinction between 'major and minor' is legally abolished, and, to quote the bill, 'has placed all theatres upon an equal footing of security and respectability, leaving no difference except in the object and conduct of the management.' Law therefore has done what law could do, and that is in the present instance undone all that it had previously done. Law is needed to explain and repeal law; and for the latter purpose is especially needed where monopoly affects the progress of art. There is a relation, however, in the present subject which law cannot touch.

"Society may have outgrown the drama, and by many it is suspected that such is actually the case in England. The last accounts from America also say that although Mr. Macready was playing to crowded audiences at the Park Theatre, they are not fashionable ones. It is something that these crowded audiences though not fashionable are possible. Here, on the contrary, all classes have long ceased to crowd the theatre to witness the legitimate drama. Opera and ballets still have their votaries; and Mr. Bunn has this week received a testimonial, as it is called, for revivifying 'Old Drury' by their means; and now that Old Drury has in effect no exclusive patent, the proprietors have a right to make it profitable by any and every legal and moral means.

"Not alone Old Drury, however, but every other



theatre more or less connected with the West End of London, has pursued the same course, and the receipts have proved that the managers were right in doing so. The present time then declares against Shakespeare and legitimists. Nevertheless, there is always to be found an outlying portion of the population to which amusements voted vulgar or obsolete by the more refined are yet the best they can afford or enjoy. A lord's cast off clothes will make a gentleman of the Sunday operative.

“Among two millions of inhabitants the metropolis must have somewhere a population too remote, by reason either of condition or situation, from fashionable influences to be entitled to despise ‘the ruder sports’ in which our fathers delighted. It had been frequently suspected that the neighbourhood of Islington and Pentonville contained many such old-fashioned people, from the fact of the theatre there being always profitably conducted, and sometimes succeeding with the Shakespearean drama, even when under legal interdict. But the locale was despised by high actors, as well as high caste admirers. Destiny has at length found there the only theatre in which the persecuted drama could find refuge; and Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps—two among the best tragic performers now in London—have been glad to make it their asylum.

“On Monday last they produced ‘Macbeth’ with new scenery, and got it up certainly in a style which elicited audible exclamations of astonishment from the usual visitors in the boxes. Such, too, was the curiosity excited that it was necessary to pile up elevated forms in the lobbies for the literally overflowing audience, where, we conjecture, they could see little and hear less.

Mrs. Warner enacted the part of Lady Macbeth with great care and force. Mr. Phelps we have never seen before in 'Macbeth,' and it was certainly the ablest performance which he has yet exhibited. Since Edmund Kean's we have seen nothing better for vigour and vivid effect. It is essentially distinct from and stands in contrast with Mr. Macready's, which, however fine and classical in its conception, is but too obviously open to the Scotch sneer of presenting 'a very respectable gentleman in considerable difficulties,' so studied is it in all parts, and subdued into commonplace by too much artifice; fretfulness, moreover, substituting high passion in the fifth act. The straightforward and right earnest energy of Mr. Phelps's acting, on the contrary, made all present contemplate the business as one of seriousness and reality; while the occasional pathos of his declamation thrilled the heart within many a rude bosom with unwonted emotion. The spectators were visibly agitated and incapable of resisting the impulse."

Samuel Phelps severed his connection with Sadler's Wells as a manager on the 15th of March, 1862, modestly, quietly, and without any ostentation or fuss. He took his usual benefit just as if nothing had happened; but many remember how that this excellent citizen and simple-minded fellow, an actor head and front among his compeers, had won over thousands and thousands, in the days when education was not what it is to-day, to the love of the drama as an intellectual art, to the worship of the theatre as an exhilarating recreation, soothing the body and refreshing the soul.

He played "The City Madam." Having let the theatre to Captain Horton Rhys and Miss Catherine Lucette, he was persuaded later on in the year to play

a farewell engagement of six or eight weeks. On the 6th of November, 1862, again without any flourish of trumpets, he took his farewell benefit, exactly sixteen years before his death. The play was "Julius Cæsar."

He acted Brutus; Creswick was Cassius; and his son, Edmund Phelps, Marc Antony. It has been erroneously stated that Phelps never acted again at Sadler's Wells, and indeed from that time never entered the theatre. Presently I shall prove that he did.

The excellent work of Samuel Phelps in the cause of the legitimate and literary drama was so well summed up by John Oxenford in *The Times*, that I cannot do better than quote the words of the veteran and scholarly critic.

"Mr. Phelps's engagement at Sadler's Wells Theatre has now come to an end; and the house, still under the management of Miss Lucette, will, it seems, be devoted for some time to the performance of opera, the first in the series of lyrical works being 'Il Trovatore.'

"Although Mr. Phelps retired from the management of Sadler's Wells Theatre early in the present year, it was not until last week, when he finally took leave of a public, many members of which have grown up from childhood to manhood during the period of his career, that his connection with the establishment seems really to have terminated. With honest pride he was able to remind his audience of the very great deal he had done in extending a knowledge of the Shakespearean drama in the course of nineteen years; and his statement that he had produced no less than thirty-four of the plays of our great national poet will surprise all who recollect how small a portion of Shakespeare's works ordinarily find a passage from the library to the stage. But it

was one of the most interesting features of Mr. Phelps's management that he generally contrived, once or twice in the year, to place upon his boards some play which had long been assigned to the closet only ; and thus he was not only the missionary of dramatic legitimacy to the inhabitants of Pentonville and its neighbourhood, but he offered to the literary world in general an opportunity of witnessing a theatrical representation of works of literary celebrity, which, if not seen at Sadler's Wells, could not be seen at all.

"The doubtful plays, 'Pericles,' 'Timon of Athens,' 'Antony and Cleopatra,'—with Miss Glyn's beautiful impersonation of the Egyptian Queen—and many other remarkable revivals, served to show how willingly Mr. Phelps deviated from the beaten track, in order to diffuse a knowledge of the great poet to the illustration of whom he had devoted his talents and his energies. Let it be added that all the pieces he revived were admirably executed.

"His company, though not for the most part composed of actors celebrated at the West End of the town, were drilled with consummate tact into a high degree of efficiency—individuals were skilfully made subservient to the general effect ; and during the joint reign of Mr. Phelps and Mr. Greenwood—who directed the commercial part of the business—no one ever quitted Sadler's Wells after the conclusion of a performance without the conviction that he had devoted his evening to a highly intellectual entertainment, most conscientiously prepared.

"In his histrionic capacity Mr. Phelps has left deeply impressed upon the minds of the public many theatrical types of his own creation that will not be easily obliterated. Bottom in 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream,'

so different from all previous conceptions of the character, Justice Shallow in the Second Part of 'Henry the Fourth,' Don Adriano de Armado, in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' and above all Sir Pertinax in Macklin's comedy, which he alone maintains upon the stage, are specimens of original thought, carefully realised, that in their way could scarcely be surpassed. Attention to decoration was also prominent among Mr. Phelps's qualifications; and, though a stern upholder of legitimacy, he never fell into the erroneous belief that Shakespeare is best honoured by shabby scenery and dresses. 'Pericles,' 'Timon,' 'Antony and Cleopatra,' with many other pieces, were attractive as spectacles, and every play was well put on the stage.

"In the history of the English drama Mr. Phelps's management is highly important from the circumstance that it may be regarded as the first significant result of that alteration of the law by which the managers of the patent houses were deprived of their exclusive right to represent the legitimate drama. Whether the virtual abolition of the patent was followed by a few trifling displays of legitimacy in fresh places prior to the commencement of Mr. Phelps's enterprises, we are not prepared to affirm or deny; but certainly the opening of Sadler's Wells by him and Mrs. Warner in the year 1844 was the first instance of the regular employment of a minor theatre for the performance of the poetical drama. We may add by way of conclusion that Mr. Phelps, who was the first to profit by theatrical free trade, never used his advantage for any but the highest purposes, and that he took with him to Sadler's Wells the principles which Mr. Macready had adopted at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. The managerial predecessors of Mr. Macready had often acted like dogs in the manger,

neither playing the legitimate drama themselves nor allowing it to be played by any one else ; but Mr. Phelps, with the liberty of doing whatever he pleased, rigidly confined himself during a period of nineteen years to the maintenance of the highest form of the drama. His labours were carried on in a comparatively obscure part of the town, but this conscientious zeal must entitle him to universal respect."

It is noteworthy that Phelps during his Sadler's Wells management revived Robert Browning's tragedy "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon," first produced in 1842 at Drury Lane. He played his original character, Thorold, Lord Tresham, better than he did at the outset. G. K. Dickinson afterwards took the part of Henry, Earl of Mertoun, created by James Anderson ; and Miss Cooper appeared as Mildred Tresham, played in the first instance by Helen Faucit.

On the occasion of Macready's farewell to the stage on the 26th of February, 1851, Phelps was the Macduff to Macready's Macbeth ; and his fervent admirers always insist that on that memorable occasion he gave his venerated chief a "dusting." But we all know how easy it is for a Macduff to "score off" the best Macbeth. Macduff comes on alert and charged with sympathy when Macbeth is tired and played out. Macduff is one of the most "grateful" characters to an actor of power and enthusiasm. The bill is so interesting that I venture to print it. It will be observed that the Malcolm on this memorable evening, when Johnny Toole and his friend Lowne had struggled to the pit and survived the encounter, was Mr. H. T. Craven, actor and dramatic author, who is now happily alive and well.

**THEATRE ROYAL, DUNDEE LANE.**

*Lessee and Manager, Mr. James Anderson.*

The performance will commence at seven precisely, doors open at 6.30.

**MR. MACREADY'S BENEFIT.**

On which occasion he will perform for the last time in Shakespeare's tragedy of "Macbeth" and take his

**FAREWELL OF THE STAGE.**

*This Evening, Wednesday, February the 28th, 1851, will be acted  
Shakespeare's Tragedy of*

**"MACBETH."**

<i>Duncan, King of Scotland</i>	. . . . .	Mr. J. W. Bay.
<i>Malcolm</i>	} (His Sons)	Mr. H. T. Craven.
<i>Donalbain</i>		Miss White.
<i>Macbeth</i>	} (Generals in the King's army)	Mr. Macready.
<i>Banquo</i>		Mr. Howa.
<i>Macduff</i>	} (Noblemen of Scotland)	Mr. Phelps.
<i>Lenox</i>		Mr. Braid.
<i>Rosse</i>		Mr. Cathcart.
<i>Fleance</i>		Master Samson.
<i>Sward</i>	(Earl of Northumberland)	Mr. M. M. Simpson.
<i>Seyton</i>	(An Officer)	Mr. H. Butler.
<i>Doctor</i>		Mr. Bisson.
<i>Officers</i>		Messrs. A. Brindal, Coe, Harris, Henry and Simpson.
<i>Lady Macbeth</i>		Mrs. Warner.
<i>Gentlewoman</i>		Mrs. Barrett.
<i>Three Witches</i>		Messrs. Emery, J. Bland and Barrett.
<i>Hecate</i>		Miss P. Horton.

Mr. Macready embraces this opportunity of tendering his thanks to

**MR. PHELPS AND MRS. WARNER**

for the offer of their valuable services.

The evening's entertainment will conclude with the operetta in one Act  
entitled—

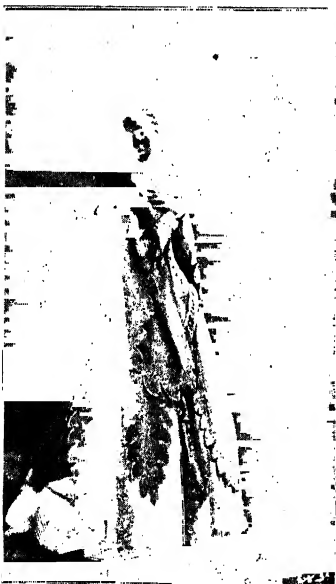
**"THE CADI'S DAUGHTER."**



MARIE LITTON



*Photo by]* ADA CAVENDISH. [*Adolphe Beau.*



*Photos by]* MISS HEATH,  
(Mrs. Wilson Barrett.)



PATTIE OLIVER. [*Adolphe Beau.*





Another interesting programme in connection with Phelps is that of the Festival Performances at Her Majesty's Theatre on the 19th of January, 1858, when H.R.H. the Princess Royal (afterwards the Empress of Germany) was married to Prince Frederick William of Prussia. It is interesting because the occasion started a fierce controversy between the Phelpsites and the Charles Keanites, which will be described later on, and in greater detail, in connection with the career of Charles Kean. Charles Kean felt aggrieved because, although he was the Court Master of the Revels, the first Shakespearean representation was devoted to Phelps and the major part of his Sadler's Wells company. This was a very sore point with Charles Kean, who was of a jealous and sensitive nature. In those days the leading actor wanted to have "the centre of the stage," and all the illumination possible. Oxford Street in the West was not prepared to yield to Islington in the North, at what was erroneously supposed to be a Court function.

Still, for all that, Phelps was commanded twice to appear at Windsor Castle. On the 30th of November, he played Mercutio to the Romeo of Fred Robinson, and the Juliet of Miss Heath (afterwards Mrs. Wilson Barrett). On the 24th of January, 1861, he played "Richelieu" at Windsor Castle, when the names of Hermann Vezin, W. H. Vernon, Miss Heath and Miss Fanny Josephs, appeared in the cast, and Charles Warner (Lickfold) made his very first appearance on any stage as one of the pages, in company with Samuel Phelps's youngest son.

## HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

*Festival Performance in honour of the Nuptials of H.R.H. the Princess  
Royal with H.R.H. the Prince Frederick William of Prussia.*

Tuesday evening, 19th January.      Thursday evening, 21st January.  
Saturday evening, 23rd January.      Friday evening, 29th January.

First Representation, Tuesday evening, 19th January, 1858,  
*Commencing at half-past seven with Shakespeare's Tragedy of*

## "MACBETH."

(Preceded by Spohr's Overture to "Macbeth.")

With Lock's Incidental Music.      The Scenery by Mr. Charles Marshall.

<i>Duncan</i>	. . . . . (King of Scotland)	. . . . . Mr. T. C. Harris.
<i>Malcolm</i>	} . . . (Sons of the King)	Mr. F. Robinson.
<i>Donalbain</i>		Miss C. Parkes.
<i>Macbeth</i>	} (Generals of the King's army)	Mr. Phelps.
<i>Banquo</i>		Mr. A. Rayner.
<i>Macduff</i>		Mr. Howe.
<i>Lenox</i>	} . (Noblemen of Scotland)	Mr. Seyton.
<i>Rosse</i>		Mr. Belford.
<i>Fleance</i>	. . . . . (Son to Banquo)	Miss Williams.
<i>Sivard</i>	. (General of the English forces)	Mr. Meagreson.
<i>Seyton</i>		Mr. C. Fenton.
<i>A Physician</i>		Mr. Range.
<i>First Officer</i>		Mr. Lee.
<i>Second Officer</i>		Mr. Lickfold.
<i>Lady Macbeth</i>		Miss Helen Faucit.
<i>Gentlewoman</i>		Miss Rawlings.
<i>The Three Witches</i>	}	Messrs. Emery, Ray, and Lewis Ball.
<i>Hecate</i>		Mr. Weiss.
<i>Singing Witches</i>		Madame Weiss, Mdle. Sedlatzek, Mr. Mon- tem Smith, Mr. Winn, and Mrs. Bartleman.

At the end of the play the "National Anthem," by Mdme. Weiss, Mdle. Sedlatzek, Mr. Weiss, Mr. Smith, Mr. Winn and Mr. Bartleman, assisted by M. Benedict's Vocal Association of 300 voices.

Conductor of the music, Mr. Benedict.

To conclude with Mr. Oxenford's Farce of

## "TWICE KILLED."

<i>Mr. Euclid</i>	. . . Mr. Keeley.	<i>Robert</i>	. . . Mr. Clindon.
<i>Tom (his servant)</i>	Mr. Clark.	<i>Mrs. Facile</i>	. . . Mrs. Leigh Mur- ray.
<i>Mr. Fergus Fable</i>	Mr. W. Templeton.	<i>Miss Julia Flighty</i>	Miss Oliver.
<i>Mr. Ralph Reckless</i>	Mr. Kinloch.	<i>Fanny Pepper</i>	. . Mrs. Keeley.
<i>Mr. Holdfast</i>	Mr. Tilbury.		

*Each Performance to commence punctually at 7.30. Doors will be open at 6.30.*

This is a very remarkable cast. Frederic Robinson, on his return home, after a long, valuable, and honourable career in America, and the veteran and amiable Henry Howe have subsequently been seen in Henry Irving's company at the Lyceum. Lewis Ball is still alive and well, and in recent years has been attached to Mr. Edward Compton's excellent old comedy company. Caroline Parkes became a favourite burlesque actress and dancer in pantomime; and Billy Belford was ever a popular comedian at the Strand in the days of the Swanboroughs and Marie Wilton. Charles Fenton, the wonderful raconteur, was attached to the Vaudeville in the days of James and Thorne. Mr. Lickfold was the father of our excellent and admirable actor, Charles Warner. Sam Emery was the father of Miss Winifred Emery (Mrs. Cyril Maude). The singers were recruited from St. Paul's Cathedral choir. M. Benedict blossomed into Sir Julius Benedict, Miss Oliver in after years assumed the management of the Royalty Theatre, and Mrs. Keeley lived to over ninety-three years of age.

That the difficulty between Samuel Phelps and Charles Kean made some stir in the dramatic world and gave rise to not a little acrimonious criticism is shown by an extract from one of the newspapers of the day. But it has ever been so. The staunch supporters of Booth and Betterton considered David Garrick very small beer. "Avaunt unnatural start—affected pause!" Quin said of little David, "that if the young fellow was right, he and the rest of the players had been all wrong." And so it went on. *Kembleites versus Edmund Keanites; Edmund Keanites versus Forrestites; Macreadyites versus Phelpsites; Phelpsites versus Charles Keanites; Charles Keanites versus*

Fechterites, and so on and on, for ever. Nor is this partisan feeling in the case of Shakespeare and the legitimate drama, and in the interests of ambitious actors, talented or otherwise—generally otherwise—wholly absent in the dramatic discussions of to-day.

The “old school” and the “new school” have been, are, and will be for ever, at loggerheads. The disciples of a Barry Sullivan, or a Dillon, or a Tom King, snorted at a Henry Irving. The champions of Beerbohm Tree “bite their thumbs” at a Lewis Waller, who in my humble opinion is destined, by his virility, his elocutionary excellence, his love of Shakespeare as a student, and his power as an actor, to be one of the first of the newest school.

I *was* one of the new school in the early sixties, now I am one of the *old* school in the latest nineties,—I make this humble confession.

But listen to one of the heart and soul partisans of Samuel Phelps, to whom the very name of Charles Kean was enough to provoke temper.

“It is doubtless in the recollection of most of our readers that on Tuesday, the 19th of January, 1858, a series of theatrical performances intended to celebrate the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Prince of Prussia was commenced by Mr. Phelps, and the members of the Sadler’s Wells company. The Queen was present, and the play selected was ‘Macbeth.’

“The event itself would call for only a passing notice at our hands. Mr. Phelps has acted before the Queen on previous occasions; and though of course he felt honoured, as all her subjects would by contributing in any manner to her amusement or gratification, he has achieved too high and too deserved a reputation

by his industry and talents to boast much of such patronage.

"The occurrence, however, called forth certain remarks in *The Times* of the following day so disparaging to Mr. Phelps, and so absurdly laudatory of Mr. Kean, that as Sadler's Wells and its reputation is a sort of local institution, we feel bound to offer a few observations on the subject.

"*The Times* says that a Shakespearian play without Mr. Kean 'is like a Lord Mayor's Show without the Lord Mayor.' The resemblance between the Lord Mayor's Show and a Shakespearian tragedy by Kean is complete enough; but who goes to see the Lord Mayor?

"This most unfortunate simile is followed by an assertion which Mr. Kean's friends have repeated so often that he must also begin to believe it himself. We quote the exact words: 'Mr. Charles Kean has made the Princess's Theatre the acknowledged home of the Shakespearian drama.' If gorgeous scenery, and elaborate decorations, with every musical, mechanical, and scientific appliance can make a home for the drama, there is no question that the drama must be thoroughly at home at the Princess's. But these things are no more substitutes for that literal embodiment of an author's meaning which makes a home for the drama, than the stately apartments and painted walls of a palace would be substitutes to an individual for the kindly sympathies and genial intercourse which makes *his* home.

"The painter, the tailor, and the upholsterer, are Mr. Kean's interpreters of Shakespeare. The best of their kind, no doubt; but these are servants in our school of the drama, not teachers. The palace Richard the Second lived in, the clothes he wore, and the throne he

sat upon, may all be seen at the Princess's. But how about the King? He is miserably deceived who fancies he has seen anything like him in Oxford Street. In life and in Shakespeare, a palace is made for a King to live in, and a throne for a King to sit upon; but at the Princess's the order of things is reversed. There a King only completes the representation of a palace, and adds *by his robes* to the grandeur of the throne. An actor at that theatre bears a strong analogy to the wooden dummy which the tailor exhibits in proof of his skill.

"The little importance which Mr. Kean attaches to good acting needs no further proof than the fact of his generally taking the principal character himself. An extremely insignificant figure, a voice without compass, depth, or richness, and a delivery in the highest degree monotonous and ineffective, are his principal characteristics. It is not enough to say he is not an actor; he has not a single attribute of an actor. And this is the man whose theatre, according to *The Times*, holds an exclusive rank for the performance of the tragic drama!

"In the exhibition of theatrical spectacles every one will allow that Mr. Kean is unrivalled; but Sadler's Wells is as much before the Princess's in point of acting as the Princess's is before Sadler's Wells in point of scenery. For the simple reason that scenery is an adjunct of acting, and not, as Mr. Kean's friends suppose, acting an adjunct of scenery. We claim a higher rank for Mr. Phelps's management than Mr. Kean's. We do this on the same principle as we should pronounce Shakespeare in a plain sheep's skin, a better book than Kotzebue in gilded morocco.

"The luxury and pomp of Roman manners and the magnificence of the Imperial Government were never so conspicuous as when the strength of the Empire was

decaying, and its safeguards neglected. So, to compare small things with great, Mr. Kean and his imitators are investing with a meretricious splendour the remains of the drama, whose vitality they have helped to destroy.

"If ever there be, as we yet hope there may, a general revival of dramatic taste, and a true reverence for the works of our great dramatist, we may safely prophesy that Mr. Kean will come to be regarded as a master showman, and the Princess's as a kindred establishment with Madame Tussaud's.

"Our hopes of such revival now rest almost entirely on Sadler's Wells. We cannot perhaps see there so masterly a personation of every character as our fathers had at the patent theatres; but we can depend on a faithful and able presentation of the author's meaning by the company, and a real appreciation of the author's merit by the audience. 'It is impossible to regard the Pentonville district,' says the *Times*, 'as the focus of the metropolitan drama.' The sapient critic here seems to regard as the focus of the drama, the centre of the metropolis. On this ground it would be as difficult to maintain the claims of Sadler's Wells as it would be easy to upset those of the Princess's.

"We had intended to notice the demonstration made by Mr. Kean's friends at his own theatre on the night of the 'Macbeth' performance at Her Majesty's. We have only space now to express our astonishment that amongst all the reasons alleged, and surmises as to the reason, for the omission of Mr. Kean's name on the occasion, the very simple one that he cannot act 'Macbeth,' and could not easily transport to Her Majesty's the stage properties which, at the Princess's he shows in lieu of it, does not seem to have occurred to any one."



An actor is still with us, hale, hearty and vigorous, who combines the sterling qualities of the old school with the artistic refinement of the new ; and, strange to say, unites in his popular person the traditions of old Sadler's Wells with the luxurious and sometimes over-pampered theatre of to-day.

I allude to Charles Warner, one of the very best actors of my time, who, I sometimes think, has never been sufficiently appreciated by our critics, though he has never failed to find favour with the discriminating public. Charles Warner's father, Mr. Lickfold, as will have been seen, was in the stock company at old Sadler's Wells, and his son made his first appearance on any stage at the invitation of good old Samuel Phelps.

Charles Warner has that one essential quality that the majority of English actors lack,—virility. He never over-acts, and certainly never under-acts, and he unquestionably is able to throw the glow of his electricity over the footlights. No one can talk, yawn, doze or be uninterested when Charles Warner is on the stage. By some this fine actor is only regarded as an exponent of "mere melodrama," and they would relegate him for the term of his natural life to the heroes of the Adelphi, in which characters he had no rival.

But his qualities are far more distinguished than that. His Coupeau in "Drink," painful and realistic as it may be, is a masterpiece, and as fine a thing as has been seen on the English stage since the day of Robson. It arouses an audience to the most profound sympathy and horror, and excited women shriek out in pity and in shame at the poor wretch's degraded nature. The best French critics who have visited our country could see nothing on the English stage to excel Charles Warner's Coupeau.

His Harry Dornton, in "The Road to Ruin," is another fine performance, and illustrates his power in old comedy, whilst in essentially modern plays such as Sardou's "Odette," I think he was as powerful and sympathetic in the character of the deceived husband and father, as Dupuis the original.

We hear so much of the struggles and hardships of the young actor in days of old, that this may be a convenient place to quote Charles Warner's own experience in the days of stock companies, as contrasted with modern travelling tours, composed of young actors and actresses, trained and parroted in parts played by others in London.

Charles Warner made his first appearance on any stage at Windsor Castle on the 24th of January, 1861, before her Majesty the Queen, the Prince Consort and the Royal family, the occasion being a command night, and the principal actor, Samuel Phelps, in 'Richelieu.' Bulwer Lytton's play was acted by the whole of Mr. Phelps's Sadler's Wells company, with the exception of Miss Heath (Julie de Mortemar) who was a member of the Princess's Company under Augustus Harris the elder. Charles Warner was a boy at school, and a friend of Samuel Phelps, the youngest son of the tragedian. Young Warner and Sam Phelps were taken down to Windsor and made their appearance as pages to Richelieu on that memorable occasion,—few actors can boast of making their first appearance before such an eminent assembly.

From that period the stage was young Warner's one desire; and although his father, Mr. Lickfold, was an actor, the parental consent was withheld, and Charles determined to escape from thralldom, and obtained an engagement with 'gentleman Rodgers,' of Hanley, at the

early age of seventeen. He tells a story of his arrival at Hanley, where his sister followed to bring him back, for he had run away from home. On his arrival at Hanley, the company were absent in Lichfield—it was a circuit in those days—and they did not arrive until the Saturday, opening at Hanley on the same night. Young Warner saw the bill, and he was cast for characters in both plays, ‘The Castle Spectre’ as Sahib, ‘The Mysteries of Paris’ as Bras Rouge; he had got no scrip, and had never seen the plays—he was in dismay.

At two o’clock rehearsal was called for the night’s performance. Mr. Tyndall, the stage manager, gave young Warner the two parts. Warner explained that he had never seen the pieces, and to play two characters that night was impossible. “That’s your business,” was Tyndall’s reply. “If you can’t play those parts to-night you are of no use to us. We change every night. The bill for next week is ‘King Lear,’ ‘Macbeth,’ ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ ‘Measure for Measure,’ ‘The Gipsy King,’ and ‘Othello’—with farces. You play in all.”

“I rushed home (says Charles Warner) to my lodgings, frightened to death. My sister was awaiting me. I told her what had occurred. We sat down on the hearthrug, embraced each other and burst into tears; but I buckled to, started to study, and came through triumphantly, without needing the prompter for a word.

“A funny thing occurred during the performance of ‘The Castle Spectre.’ As the Slave, Sahib, I had to wear long brown stockings to represent the naked flesh. My legs were like two broomsticks, and my body about as flat as a match. My poor sister, to improve my legs, cut up a garment of flannel and made me pads, which, placed down the stockings, made my legs look abnormally large

in comparison to other portions of my body. Robert Pateman was playing Earl Percy, and in a struggle which occurs in the piece he seized me, and being a remarkably agile and powerful young man, he twisted both my splendid flannel calves into the front of my shins. I became cruelly deformed, and the roar of laughter which ensued ended the scene. Every time I came on after that I was received with shouts of applause and derision. However, I pulled through it all, and on Monday I appeared as the Duke of Burgundy in 'King Lear,' and was pronounced exceedingly good.

"From Hanley we went to Worcester, and I had so far progressed that I was cast for all the first walking gentlemen. The reason for my leaving Mr. Rodgers I think rather funny. My salary was eighteen shillings a week, and I had to find all stage properties—personal—boots, stockings, swords, feathers, &c., and of course all modern clothes.

"Mr. Rodgers was taking his annual benefit in Worcester, and I was playing Frederic Plum in the drama of "All that Glitters is not Gold." In the wedding scene I had to wear kid gloves. I was rather exercised in my mind, as cash was short. However, in a shop in the High Street I perceived a bill in a draper's, announcing that the establishment was selling off. I saw a pair of ladies' faded pink kids for one and six. They fitted me—I was very slight in those days. I thought I was a great success at night; but, to my astonishment, I was sent for the next morning by Mr. Rodgers, and severely rebuked for *not* wearing gloves.

"In vain I assured my manager that I did wear gloves. 'Sir, you are adding insult to injury. I was in a box and saw you. You did not wear gloves.' 'One moment, Sir.' I rushed to my room and returned

triumphantly with my pale pink kids. 'There, Sir, these are the gloves I purchased only yesterday for the occasion!' He lifted them tenderly. 'Good God, Sir! are you an idiot? what man can see faded pink gloves from the front of the house?' I expostulated with him, and told him I could not afford out of eighteen shillings to pay my fares and buy expensive properties. 'Would he make my salary one pound?' 'No, certainly not. The parts I am giving you, Sir, are worth more than money to you.' I fear I did not quite see it in that light, and in a fortnight I left, joining Nye Chart at Brighton, at thirty-five shillings a week.

"My career was very gratifying. I was offered a three years' engagement at Drury Lane under the Falconer and Chatterton management, opening as the Herald in 'King John,' acting with such famous experts of the dramatic art as Samuel Phelps, James Anderson, Barry Sullivan, Creswick, Hermann Vezin, Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Amy Sedgwick, Miss Emma Atkinson, playing in the entire round of Shakespeare, acting plays and receiving tuition from its greatest master in my time—Phelps.

"I remember an incident worth recording. 'Richelieu' was the play, and Phelps kindly cast me for François. In the big scene where Richelieu is reading and awaiting the return of François with the packet, the situation being one of the greatest in the play, Phelps gave an immense burst—'Philosophy, thou liest! Quick! the despatch! Power! Empire! Boy, the packet!'

"Then followed a fine scene for me as François, with a speech almost as effective as D'Artagnan's speech in Hamilton's 'Three Musketeers.' Phelps so paralysed me that I could not utter a word. He again repeated, 'The packet!'

"I mumbled out some incoherent sentences and said, 'I really don't know,' and made an ignominious exit. Phelps rushed to the door and said, 'D——n you, Sir, you've ruined the play!' However, he kindly forgave me, and I became a great favourite with the old man.

"The *Telegraph* criticism ran somewhat thus: 'What could the management be thinking about to cast the fine boy's part of François to the gentleman who ruined the best scene of the play, when there was such an admirable actress for the part in Miss Rose Leclercq?'

"Three years followed at the Lane, then to Sadler's Wells in a dramatisation of Dickens's novel 'Our Mutual Friend,' entitled 'The Golden Dustman,' where I made a mark as Bradley Headstone, the school-master. My first real success was at the Olympic in Byron's 'Daisy Farm,' as Charley Burridge. Then followed an engagement at the Lyceum under the Bateman management; then the Vaudeville Theatre, where I made a success as Harry Dornton; then the Haymarket, and St. James's, the sympathetic hero in 'Les Danischeffs,' in which part I was thought by some superior to M. Marais.

"Then came the Imperial, under Marie Litton, where I succeeded again as Mirabel in the 'Inconstant.' On the first performance of this play, after the Latin scene, Mirabel has a long speech, in the middle of which every word left me. I looked in vain at the prompter—not a sign! He was turning over the leaves of the book. I calmly walked to the prompt side, took the book from his hand, found the line and proceeded with the part. An immense round of applause followed this act, and the Press was unanimous in praise.

“My engagement at the Princess’s is well known, on account of the ‘Drink’ production. After that, Sadler’s Wells, opening in ‘Othello,’ followed by ‘School for Scandal,’ ‘William Tell,’ ‘Road to Ruin,’ &c., &c. Then the Adelphi, five years. Vaudeville return. Then a farewell benefit at Drury Lane. My Australian tour was originally for sixteen weeks, but was, in consequence of great success, extended to over two years. During my visit I essayed Hamlet for the first time, and the entire Press voted it my best performance. On my return to England, Drury Lane, I opened in ‘A Million of Money.’

“During my season at Sadler’s Wells I received a letter from Professor Colvin, of the British Museum, in which he said, ‘I have seen the best Italian tragedian in ‘Othello’—Salvini; last night I saw the best English Othello—Charles Warner.’”

It has been erroneously stated more than once that Phelps never appeared at Sadler’s Wells again, or entered the doors of his old home, after his last farewell in 1862. This no doubt was the general impression, but I have received some valuable notes on the subject from my old friend and Arundel Club companion, Harry Plowman, who was intimately connected with the Phelps family.

“The fact was that Phelps had made such a loose engagement with Chatterton that he found he might be farmed out, so to speak.

“Chatterton took advantage of this during the run of ‘Formosa’ in 1869, and made an engagement for Phelps to go to Sadler’s Wells.

“Phelps chafed very much at this, but after taking legal advice found he had no alternative, and accordingly

appeared on the 27th of September, 1869, for a week, alternating 'The Man of the World,' 'Richelieu,' and 'The Fool's Revenge.'

"He appeared again on October 16th, playing in 'King o' Scots' for five nights, and on the sixth night playing Othello.

"I was in the theatre on this occasion, and at the end of the play Phelps, who was very sore about the engagement, in response to a demand from the audience for a speech, came down to the footlights and explained the fact about his re-appearance.

"In the course of his remarks he touched upon the decadent condition of the theatre, comparing it to 'the temple he had reared.' These remarks gave great offence to Mr. Edgar, the manager, husband to Miss Marriott, who came into the dressing-room, where I was chatting with Phelps, whilst he was washing off his black, and demanded angrily to know why Mr. Phelps called his theatre an expletive barn?

"Phelps, who by this time had blown off the steam, simply chaffed Edgar, who got more angry than ever, and finally departed, threatening actions for libel.

"My intimacy with Phelps lasted from the period when I was only twelve years old, and almost a daily visitor as a playfellow of his son, until he finally died in my arms at Epping in 1878; and to me the idea of his being morose or surly is simply absurd; on the contrary, he was one of the kindest and most genial of men, although perhaps one of the shyest.

"He had a great objection to meeting strangers, and disliked going to dinners or social functions of any kind; he preferred the society of a few chosen friends, whom he grappled to himself 'with hoops of steel.'



"I enclose you two letters, one written to his daughter, the other to his son : these will show the true nature of the man better than anything I can say.

"I have most of the prompt books of Sadler's Wells, besides a nightly series of bills 1844-55 and the best of Phelps's dresses.

"MY DARLING,—And so to-morrow you are sixteen ? I have just been thinking, is it so long ago since I first saw that little dark thing in the street at Glasgow ? I think you have passed a tolerably pleasant life so far, and I hope that each succeeding birthday you may be enabled to say, 'This is happier than the last.' At all events, if you have all the happiness that I wish you, you will have enough to spare for some one who may want a little. You must consider that I have sent you a present. Ma has been poorly, but she is now better, and I must send her shopping next week. In the meantime you must be content with a good smacking kiss from your affectionate

"'OLD GOVERNOR P.'"

"MY DEAR OLD BOY,—This day week I hope you will be here, unless, as you intimated in one of your letters, you mean to *walk* home with some other fellows. If such is your intention of course you will not leave until Monday, the 18th, and in that case I will come down on the Sunday and walk with you—you will not see 'King John,' but that of course you will not care about. The only thing likely to interfere with this arrangement is that Mr. Chatterton wants me to play Iago for his benefit on Monday, the 18th—never mind that. I'll put him off if you like to walk home—but you must send me word directly. I hope you will come well out of the examinations—work hard, and you will enjoy your

holidays all the better. *My* holidays will be welcome. You do not seem to care much about going into the country with me, as you harp so much upon paying visits in town—going to theatres, &c. Well, you can do as you like.

“ ‘Send me word when to expect you, and what préparations we are to make for your reception.

“ ‘God bless you, my son,

“ ‘Your affectionate Gov.

“ ‘S. P.’ ”

## CHAPTER VI

### “SAMUEL PHELPS—A FREE LANCE”

“MR. PHELPS and Mr. Walter Montgomery have been engaged and will shortly appear.” This was a standing advertisement in the Lyceum playbills, and in the newspapers for many months in the year 1863, when Charles Fechter ascended the throne in Wellington Street. At last the advertisement was so often repeated that the public began to laugh, for it was a transparent “dodge” on the part of the clever Frenchman, who wanted to clear two formidable rivals out of his path, and had no objection to pay them both for “walking about,” as the saying is. This incident, which occurred in the theatrical history of yesterday, will find many an echo in the story of the drama of to-day.

Eventually the brilliant Fechter got tired of paying Phelps for doing nothing, and asked the Sadler’s Wells demigod to play the Ghost to Fechter’s Hamlet.

This put up the back of good old Samuel Phelps, who gave the Frenchman a bit of his mind. Charles Dickens was called in as arbitrator, and honourably threw over his friend Fechter, whom he had taken up with enthusiasm, suggesting that he should put up Othello and alternate the Moor and Iago with Phelps, as he had done before at the Princess’s Theatre with honest John

Ryder. But Fechter had no fit of the sulks, and the Phelps engagement was cancelled.

Poor Walter Montgomery ! His was a tragic end indeed. I met him first at the rooms of Tom Hood in Grove Place, Brompton, and here he delighted us with recitations which were admirable ; in particular he excelled in the Lancashire ballads of Edwin Waugh. He had just returned from a trip to the Isle of Man which he had taken with Martin Tupper, the author of "Proverbial Philosophy," and astonished us one night with his recital of a ballad by Tupper called "King Orrys' Grave" which the prosy poet had just written, proving that he had some dramatic grit in him after all.

When Walter Montgomery was at the Princess's Theatre, I went night after night to see him in a full round of Shakespearean characters, sitting in a favourite stall on the cross benches of the old theatre in a cosy corner next to the orchestra and the stage, and I learned much from his acting and interpretation when I was first a critic on the *Sunday Times*.

Walter Montgomery's real name was Richard Tomlinson. He was born at Gawennis, Long Island, U.S.A., on the 25th of August, 1827, and began life at Welch, Margetson and Co.'s, in the City. He was fond of theatricals, and acted with the Western Dramatic Society, and obtained his first engagement from Mr. Chute. He made a name at Bath and Bristol and in the provinces generally, and he then appeared in London at the Princess's, where he played Othello, and afterwards Romeo to the Juliet of Stella Colas. He was also a member of the Haymarket and Drury Lane companies, and made a successful Australian and American tour.

He had experienced severe losses at the Gaiety

Theatre, which apparently preyed upon his mind. He was married on the 30th of August, at St. George's, Hanover Square, to Miss Laleah Burpré Bigelow. On a certain Friday, September 2nd, he shot himself through the brain. He was excellent as Louis the Eleventh and as Sir Giles Overreach. His wife was also on the stage, and had already appeared as Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons."

There has ever been a dispute as to the exact house in which Walter Montgomery committed suicide. The following letter which I received some time ago settles that point.

"Regarding the place of decease of poor Walter Montgomery, the actor, I can enlighten you. He committed suicide at a small house in Stafford Street, between Bond Street and Albemarle Street, where he had apartments upon the first floor. It was on Monday evening, and I understood at the time he had only been married but the Saturday before. I was speaking to my colleague on the Vestry (Mr. T. Shelley)—I was then living in Piccadilly—when a maid came rushing out of the door, asking us to come up, as Mr. Montgomery was dead. Shelley ran upstairs, and asked me to inform the police at Vine Street. Shelley attended the inquest, but it was not necessary to subpoena me, so I escaped. Of course the error is not now material, only I remember the occurrence so distinctly, although some twenty-five years have since elapsed. When I returned from Vine Street the cabman was still at the door, and claimed his fare from Waterloo; it appeared that Montgomery stepped out of the hansom cab, ran up to his bed-room and shot himself before his wife could get upstairs. The poor creature was distracted for a

time, and I can recollect her alternately crying and singing in her anguish and sorrow.

"I never clearly understood what trouble had impelled him to take his own life, since he seemed so composed and inoffensive. My acquaintance with him was very slight; but I remember he once gave me tickets to see him at Drury Lane Theatre, where, if my memory be correct, he played Prince Hal in the Second Part of 'King Henry the Fourth.' But as to the locality and the incidence of his suicide, the version I have given is absolutely correct."

Walter Montgomery was buried in Brompton Cemetery, where so many great artists rest.

On leaving Fechter, Phelps threw in his lot with Chatterton and Falconer at Drury Lane and the Princess's. Never shall I forget that night at old Drury in October, 1863, when Phelps appeared in Lord Byron's gloomy play of "Manfred." In the cast, a blend this time of Phelpsites and Keanites, were John Ryder, the Abbot of St. Maurice; Miss Emma Atkinson, Clotho; Miss Rose Leclercq—a lovely girl—the Phantom of Astarte; and last but not least Miss Poole—the enchanting singer of "Wapping Old Stairs," one of the very best ballad singers of my time, happily still with us,—as Undine, Spirit of the Waters. The reception of Phelps by the old Islingtonians who had come down in swarms to support their hero, was a thing to be remembered. John Oxenford thus described it in *The Times*.

"The aspect of an audience like that which on Saturday night filled Drury Lane to overflowing can alone impress us with the value of a large theatre as a vehicle for expressing the predilection of the masses. A

large theatre scantily attended seems a dismal misappropriation of space, and for ordinary purposes a house of moderate dimensions is sufficient. But within narrow precincts it is impossible to obtain the semblance of a popular demonstration, anything approaching the effect of the ample pit, boxes, and gallery of Drury Lane, when packed close with human particles. There could not on Saturday night be a moment's doubt that the announcement of Lord Byron's '*Manfred*,' with Mr. Phelps in the principal character, had caused a fever of expectation and curiosity among that numerous class in whose eyes old Drury always has the prestige of Nationality.

"Long before the commencement of the play not only was every place occupied, but a train of disappointed persons might be seen returning from the doors unable to find room adapted to the purpose of either sitting or standing. The cause of attraction was twofold. In the first place '*Manfred*,' when brought out at Covent Garden in 1834, nearly twenty years after its publication, created sensation enough to be still remembered by elderly playgoers, who preserved the tradition of its wonders to the rising generation. The other cause of excitement was the appearance of Mr. Phelps. Not only does this gentleman stand high as a member of the theatrical profession, but his exertions in the cause of the legitimate drama at Sadler's Wells have earned for him a veneration which in some persons almost borders on idolatry.

"In the eyes of that large body of liberal-minded men who distinctly represent the extended education of the present day, and who hail everything like a revival of the Shakespearean drama as a laudable

attempt to cultivate the masses, Mr. Phelps is one of the great benefactors of his age; and probably among the throng of Saturday night were many delegates from the North of London anxious to honour their local hero on his appearance at a theatre which never wholly ceases to be considered National. We are indeed disposed to think that the anxiety to see Mr. Phelps in his new position was even more potent than the curiosity excited by the revival of 'Manfred,' for scarcely ever was heard such a burst of applause as on Saturday, when the curtain was drawn up and discovered the tragedian alone upon the stage; the acclamation seemed to be all blended into one feeling. Manfred, though a character of many words and of much reflection, is not a great acting part. The effect which the character is capable of producing depends upon sustained declamation; and perhaps the declamation of Mr. Phelps on Saturday could scarcely be surpassed, so true was his reading, so just while so unobtrusive was his discrimination of emotion."

Professor Morley followed on precisely the same lines, and his words are interesting for this reason, that almost exactly the same things are said and the same arguments used to-day. The drama is always "going to the dogs," literature and the classics are for ever being neglected; but I am candid enough to own that Professor Morley's words, written years ago, on the subject of "Manfred," that most beautiful, but, on the stage, intolerable work, will please the new school of to-day, that delights in everything that is untheatrical, undramatic, or, as they call it, "unconventional"; in plays that "consist little of action," but contain not so much poetry, which would be palatable, as very frequently, rank, and some-



times offensive realism of the grosser sort. These, however, are the Professor's words :—

“There are a few hopeful features in the recent bills of the play. Unmistakable the other evening was the enthusiastic testimony of a crammed house to the satisfaction of the public at seeing Mr. Phelps in his right place upon the boards of Drury Lane. ‘Manfred’ has the best of successes ; it brings, what it should be the aim of every manager to bring, the educated classes back into the theatre. Mr. Chatterton has now his fortune in his hands. Mr. Phelps is an actor who does not fail in high endeavour to give poetry its voice upon the stage. Some individualities of manner are felt as defects. Art, *absolutely* perfect in any man, does not appear once in three centuries. But the playgoer has much to learn—let him be sure of it—who does not feel the distinctive power of a true actor in Mr. Phelps’s delivery of Byron’s poem. The piece deserves a long run, and its influence as an antidote to some faults in the tastes of the day will be all the stronger for its want of effective dramatic action of the ordinary sort. When the town has learnt to sit and hear poetry almost for its own sake, and because it is well interpreted, it will have made a safe step towards the right sense to what it ought to look for in a play. There is plenty of vigorous dramatic action in a wholesome English play book ; but just now it is very desirable to lay the emphasis on words and thoughts. We get plays of action from the French, worded only with feeble commonplace. The action and the actors are the play ; printed—it is usually unreadable. I do not know whether there was any deliberate design to lay stress on the right point in reviving a dramatic poem that

consists little of action, and almost wholly of a poet's thought and fancy."

Once separated from the cares of management at Sadler's Wells, Phelps was, so to speak, a free lance. He never failed to find ample employment when he wanted it, his sole recreation being a day or two's fishing, staying the while at the Red Lion at Farningham. Chatterton and Falconer first snapped him up for Drury Lane, and when he had a difference of opinion with peppery Chatterton, who insisted, notwithstanding the attraction of Phelps, that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy," off went Phelps to Astley's, at the request of that energetic impresario, E. T. Smith.

When he was tired of London, away he went to the provinces, becoming an enormous favourite at Manchester in the days of Calvert—a keen lover of Shakespeare—as was Phelps in that art-loving city. Sturdy, honest Samuel Phelps was not even frightened at the name of the Gaiety Theatre, and listened to the wise counsels of John Hollingshead, who had often criticised him in the old Sadler's Wells days in the columns of the *Daily News*. His last engagement was with the enthusiastic and beautiful Miss Litton (Mrs. Wybrow Robertson) at the Aquarium, or Imperial Theatre, Westminster.

All this time he was not only reviving old friends, but creating new ones. I was certainly not one of those who sneered at his Dexter Sanderson in "On the Jury" by clever but unfortunate Watts Phillips. I always considered it a striking play, and the performance of Phelps admirable. His Mephisto in Bayle Bernard's version of Goethe's "Faust" in 1866 was a somewhat

“dour” and grim rendering of the immortal devil; but of course intensely humorous, as was everything with Phelps when comedy could be made prominent. The Marguerite of Mrs. Hermann Vezin was a delightful and intellectual performance. I can recall to this day the beauty of her invocation to the Virgin Mother of Sorrows in her trouble, and the grand effect she made in the prison scene.

I conclude it was Lord Byron’s “Marino Faliero,” called at old Drury “The Doge of Venice,” that gave rise to Chatterton’s cheap and oft-quoted epigram above noted, which was in reality invented by Charles Lamb Kenny, who was for some years Chatterton’s “literary adviser.” He and E. T. Smith, the ex-policeman and licensed victualler, sometimes wanted a literary adviser very badly; but the Doge, or the “old Dodge,” as the street boys called him, was not one of Phelps’s great characters.

He was scarcely more successful as King James the First, and Trapbois the Miser, parts he doubled, in Andrew Halliday’s “King o’ Scots,” a hash-up of Sir Walter Scott’s “Fortunes of Nigel.” He was seen to far greater advantage in 1871, in another “Scotch haggis” of Andrew Halliday, called “Rebecca,” the last stage version of “Ivanhoe.” Phelps played Isaac of York, a character he had acted at Preston, in another version of “Ivanhoe, or the Jew of York” forty years before; but, after all, clever and interesting as was Phelps, the success of the Drury Lane “Rebecca” was Rebecca herself in the person of the lovely Lilian Adelaide Neilson, who must have a special niche in my gallery of celebrities later on. Disappointed at his want of success with his Shakespeare ventures, F. B. Chatterton started a twopenny satirical paper, called *Touchstone*, which was

edited by George Augustus Sala. The publication died an early, and, I think, a deserved death.

But, as has been the case with so many great actors of the Victorian Era, Samuel Phelps was far greater as a comedian than as a tragedian. He was such a good actor that, like Edwin Booth, Charles Kean, Barry Sullivan, Charles Dillon, Henry Irving, and many more, he could adapt his style to tragedy when necessity required it, and come out of the ordeal with flying colours. Still, with him, as with many others I have seen, I think of him rather as a magnificent comedian, rugged, forcible, and always intellectual, than as a great tragedian, who could strike terror into an audience and give us the well-known shiver down the back—the true test of inspiration in acting.

I think of Phelps not as Hamlet, or Othello, or Sir Giles Overreach, but as Sir Pertinax, Justice Shallow, Bottom, Falstaff, Job Thornberry, and Sir Peter Teazle,—perhaps the best I have ever seen, although William Farren runs him very close, possessing, perhaps, less boisterous chuckling humour, but more style in consonance with the century depicted and its manners, that so colour and give style to the immortal play. Again, though I have never seen at least two scenes in "*Richelieu*"—one of them the curse of Rome—delivered with a thrill that an Edmund Kean might have given had he ever had the opportunity, a thrill to shake the audience with its awful solemnity, no tearing of passion or passage to tatters, but acted at a white heat of power—I preferred the *Richelieu* of Phelps as a whole, to the *Richelieu* of Edwin Booth or Henry Irving, who, however, ran him very close.

On the other hand, I preferred the Bertuccio of Edwin

Booth in "The Fool's Revenge," to that of Phelps, far and away the best thing I ever saw Edwin Booth do ; although in America they pinned their faith to his Hamlet.

Hamlet and Iago notwithstanding, Samuel Phelps was a magnificent all-round actor, with an enormous range of characters at his fingers' ends, and I am surprised that in these days his memory does not receive greater and wider recognition. He was within an ace of being added to the long list of actors who have died on the stage. The scene has been well described by his nephew and biographer.

"Towards the end of 1877, he played for some time at the Aquarium Theatre several of his best characters, and agreed to act there again under Miss Litton's management early in 1878 ; but before this latter came off he, after repeated solicitations, but against his will almost, agreed to recite at the Albert Hall the illustrative verses at a performance of ' Athalie,' which, had he not done, he might still have been alive. He first of all caught a cold there at rehearsal, and increased it so much at the performance, either the same or next evening, that he had a bad attack of lumbago, a thing he had never suffered from before in his life. This was in the middle of a week in February, and he was to appear at the Aquarium on the following Monday, which he did, although altogether unfit. He acted all that week, and five days of the next, Cardinals Richelieu and Wolsey alternately, his last part being Wolsey on Friday, the 1st of March. Considering his state of health, he went through the part marvellously, until he came to the last great speech, commencing, ' Farewell, a long farewell to

all my greatness,' into which he introduced several incongruous words ; but when he reached those lines,

“ ‘ O Cromwell, Cromwell !

Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal

I serv'd my King, He would not in mine age

Have left me naked to mine enemies,'

he gathered himself up with tremendous energy, as was his wont, and almost on tip-toe, for one more triumph gave them as far as 'zeal,' with all his usual grandeur and pathos ; but after muttering a word or two more, he fell on the shoulder of his secretary, and the career of our hero was closed."

All through the scene he had been, at his own request, supported by Cromwell, and never let go for a moment his nervous grasp of the secretary's arm. He strained heroically against illness to reach his usual great effect ; but after the opening burst, he entirely collapsed, and was almost carried off the stage by Norman Forbes-Robertson, who was playing with him, as he had done for some time in place of his brother, the character of Cromwell. The house shook with applause ; but the audience little dreamed that the object of their adoration was lying in his dressing-room almost unconscious, and that they had seen their favourite for the last time. Mr. John Forbes-Robertson, father of Norman and one of the authors of "The Life of Phelps," adds, "He had told me long before this that the character he should like best to play when he took his farewell of the stage was that of Cardinal Wolsey. Did he think, I wonder, when he was being borne helplessly off by his young secretary, Cromwell, that his farewell was already taken and his wish fulfilled?"

This was E. L. Blanchard's description of the actor he knew so well. My old friend constantly accompanied

me to Sadler's Wells, where I used to meet John Oxenford, J. A. Heraud, Bayle Bernard, Joe Langford, Frederick Guest Tomlins, Sterling Coyne, Henry Howe, son of the actor, who often criticised his own father—irreverent, but delightful youth!—Leicester Buckingham and other distinguished critics who were wont to foregather at the Myddelton Head, to discuss plays and players.

“No actor, of the present century at least, has ever passed away leaving so many varied theatrical recollections behind him as Samuel Phelps, around whose grave in Highgate Cemetery assembled yesterday troops of his professional companions, representing all the best theatres in the metropolis, and crowds of personal friends, who had happened to survive the man for whom they entertained such strong feelings of regard. Indeed we should have to go back to the days of Garrick to find his compeer, in embodying, alike with equal success, the contrasted impersonations of Shakespearean character furnished by no less than thirty-four plays of the national dramatist, all produced in succession by Mr. Phelps during his eighteen years' memorable association with the management of Sadler's Wells. David Garrick never attempted to exhaust the repertory of Shakespeare in this manner, but he succeeded in displaying equal talent in comedy and tragedy; and no follower of the histrionic art has since shown more comprehensiveness of power in this respect than the thorough artist whose vivid and varied portraitures can no longer delight the playgoer.

“To even enumerate the names of the long list of characters played by Mr. Phelps during the half century which commenced with his early experience of an actor's

provincial life in the York circuit, and closed with his latest performance of Richelieu and Wolsey at the Royal Aquarium Theatre in the Spring of the present year, would require not a column of a newspaper, but the pages of a volume. That in some instances the obituary notices have done but scant justice to the vast ability he displayed may be readily explained by the circumstance that few of the critics who saw him in his best days are left alive to repeat the appreciative opinions expressed thirty years ago, at which time the departed actor may be said to have attained the zenith of his histrionic position.

"It is one of the penalties a public favourite has to pay for the privilege of living on, that each lessens the number of those who can remember the achievements of other days; and when the value of a name only is left to be discussed in a playbill the measure of approval is very naturally apportioned to the effect produced. A spectator witnessing the decay of that physical power once spoken of as the groundwork of an excellent reputation must hesitate to endorse former opinions. Hence comes the disappointment and disparagement; and it is quite possible that the present generation, attracted to the later performances of the actor by the fame he had acquired in his manhood, came occasionally away from the theatre with a doubting faith in the truthfulness of past eulogies.

"Those who yet survive to tell of the happy intellectual hours they enjoyed at Sadler's Wells during the memorable management of Messrs. Phelps and Greenwood, from 1844 to 1862, will bear ready testimony to the excellence of impersonations which both in tragedy and comedy have never been surpassed during the present century.



“Away from the exercise of the art to which he so earnestly devoted himself, Mr. Phelps was simply to be regarded as a quiet country gentleman, of reserved habits, fond of rural pursuits, addicted to the exercise of the gun and the fishing rod, and perhaps prouder of his skill with both than of the warmest plaudits of an enthusiastic audience. During the theatrical vacation he was to be found for many successive years at his favourite haunt, the Lion Hotel at Farningham, in Kent, where he stayed for weeks together to enjoy the pleasure of trout fishing in the River Darent, which ran its meandering course in front of the gardens of the old hostelry.

“The farmers in the neighbourhood never suspected that a visitor who conversed with them so freely about their crops, was at the same time busy in studying the best mode of rendering the next Shakespearean play to be revived on the banks of the New River; and it is on record that a Kentish yeoman bringing his family to town for the purpose of seeing ‘The Doge of Venice’ at Drury Lane, and recognising a familiar voice and manner in the prominent actor, astonished the audience in the midst of the play by involuntarily exclaiming, ‘Blest if the Doge isn’t the old Farningham fisherman!’”

Among the celebrated survivors of the palmy days of Sadler’s Wells are Hermann Vezin, an actor of rare culture, an excellent elocutionist, and an able teacher of the art of acting to others, who has deputed for Henry Irving at the Lyceum; and Mrs. Hermann Vezin, formerly Mrs. Charles Young, a delightful actress, one of the best of her time, and whose early departure from the stage has ever been deplored by me. I shall

never forget her performance in Sardou's "Fernande"—the Sutherland Edwards version—as Clotilde on the 15th of October, 1870; it was the finest high comedy, and such as is seldom seen to-day. We have also with us Miss Murray, the wife of Samuel Brandram, the gifted elocutionist and entertainer; Lewis Ball, the veteran actor, who recently did such splendid work with the Edward Compton company; and Frederick Robinson, who lately returned home from America, and to whom allusion has already been made.

Mrs. Hermann Vezin has favoured me with the following interesting and flattering communication:—

"26 CROFTDOWN ROAD, HIGHGATE RISE, N.W.

February 20th, 1899.

"DEAR MR. SCOTT,—I fear my attempt at note making is not very successful, and that my limited information will be of little service; but should there be any questions that I can answer, please do not hesitate to ask one who is your debtor for many splendid and still treasured criticisms.

"Believe me, sincerely yours,

"JANE ELIZABETH VEZIN.

"I made my first appearance in England at Sadler's Wells in 1857, under the management of Messrs. Phelps and Greenwood. At that time the theatre used to be spoken of as 'the home of the legitimate drama,' nothing else being played. I was there during the seasons of 1857-8, and '58-9, and also '60-1, when Mr. Phelps became sole lessee and manager. In those days a run of a piece was *unknown* at Sadler's Wells, the bill being changed always twice if not three times in a week. My first season commenced on September 13th,

and I made my appearance on the 15th as Julia in 'The Hunchback,' and during that season of a little over six months I played no less than twenty-one characters.

"Between September 26th and October 21st, I acted for the first time Imogen in 'Cymbeline,' the Princess in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' and Rosalind in 'As You Like it,' and had also to find and arrange all my costumes. What a difference nowadays! And, although Sadler's Wells was only a suburban theatre, there was nothing provincial about the performances—indeed, quite the reverse. The company was an excellent one, the principal members having acted together for years before I joined them. The plays were all adequately mounted, and the audience one of the very best I ever played to."

One last word more about Samuel Phelps. "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." This at any rate shall not be said of Samuel Phelps. I am able to print a letter written to me by Mr. Lewis Ball, one of the famous Sadler's Wells Company, who has nothing but good to say of his old chief. "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*" is a very easy-going motto; but Mr. Lewis Ball, one of our oldest and most respected actors, speaks of Phelps with real affection and esteem for his many excellent qualities.

"1 BUTE ESPLANADE, BUTE DOCKS, CARDIFF,  
March 8th, 1899.

"DEAR SIR,—I am afraid I can tell you very little about Sadler's Wells that would interest either yourself or your readers, as my recollections of so long ago are almost entirely personal, and I always look back with

pride and pleasure to the many happy years I spent under the management of Mr. Phelps, to whose kindness, indulgence, and instruction I owe so much.

"I have heard him called harsh, severe, morose, but I never found him so; he only wanted his business attended to, and, that being done, no man enjoyed a little light conversation more than Samuel Phelps. For myself, I never had one unkind word from him, though I am sure I more than once deserved it. I remember on one occasion being guilty of a fault which I am sure no other manager would have overlooked or forgiven. It was during the first run of 'Henry the Fifth' (I think in 1853), in which I played Fluellen, Mr. Henry Marston was speaking in the green-room about my father, who was an old friend of his, and I was so interested that when the call-boy—I think the late Edward Righton held the situation at the time—called me for my next scene, I did not notice him; and thinking I had not heard, he touched me on the arm, and said, 'You are called, Mr. Ball.'

"I thanked him and thought no more about it, but went up to my dressing-room and quietly filling a pipe was indulging in a smoke, for though it was *strictly forbidden* we did now and then indulge,—Mr. George Bennett being, I think, the greatest offender. By-and-by I heard loud murmurs, a rushing of feet and calls of 'Mr. Ball! Mr. Ball.' Then the prompter rushed into the room, exclaiming, 'Mr. Ball, they are waiting for you and have been for some minutes, and Mr. Phelps on the stage all the time.'

"I can't say I flew, but I do think I jumped down the stairs, and rushed on at the first entrance I came to—of course it was the wrong one. I was so confused that I made a sad bungle of the whole scene; and, when I left

the stage, felt so disgusted with myself that I did not know if it would be best to run away and hide myself, or stay till he came off and get it over at once.

"I decided on the latter, and sat in the green-room waiting for him. When he came in he looked anything but pleased, and said, 'Well, you made a nice thing of that! What excuse have you to offer?' I gasped out, 'None at all, Mr. Phelps. I am totally defenceless and have no excuse to offer; it was an act of gross carelessness. I can only express my great regret and sincere apology.'

"He then looked almost as much confused as I was, and asked, 'Were you called?' I said, 'Yes, and thinking I had not heard him Teddy called me a second time.' This confession appeared to amuse him, for, with a smile passing over his face, he said, 'Well, you are the first actor I ever met who, having kept the stage waiting, did not blame the call-boy.' And there the matter ended. That was Mr. Phelps as a manager. May I now trouble you with a few words about him as a man?

"Some time after that, I had a telegram given to me in the green-room during the performance, which I found to be from Newcastle-on-Tyne, telling me that if I wished to see my mother alive I was to go at once. Mr. Phelps saw that it was bad news, and said, 'Nothing serious, I hope, Ball.' I gave it to him to read, and when he had done so, asked, 'What am I to do, Mr. Phelps?' He looked as if the question were unnecessary, and said, 'Do? Why, go, of course; it is too late to-night, but take the first train in the morning.'

"As I was going out of the room he called me back saying, 'And, Ball, don't come back till you find things better.' Then, with a look full of kindness and feeling, and gently pressing my hand, he added—'or worse.' I was absent more than a week, and on my return found him

most kind and considerate in every respect. Surely that man could not be called harsh, severe or unkind.

"I often wondered if his admirers who used to crowd the theatre on the first night of a new part would have enjoyed it so much if they could have guessed what he was suffering. I cannot call it stage-fright, but he was the most nervous first-night man I ever met, so much so that on the production of 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' I was really afraid that he would never be able to speak at all. There were four of us waiting to enter with him. Mr. J. W. Ray, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Charles Fenton, and myself. I happened to stand on his right side, and while the cheers with which he was greeted on his entrance were repeated again and again, he got hold of my wrist and gripped it with such force that I thought we must both have fallen, and was glad when he pulled himself together and let me go.

"He scarcely recovered himself during the whole night; but how he played the part those who were fortunate enough to see it could not soon forget—I never shall. I pitied him for his nervous suffering, but I envied his success, and could not help wishing that 'Heaven had made me such a man.'

"And now I think I have, or, rather, my daughter has, written as much as you will care to read; and regretting that I could not send what you required,

"I am, yours very truly,

"LEWIS BALL."

When Samuel Phelps died, a very tender letter was addressed from Glasgow to his faithful friend, E. Y. Lowne, the Macready enthusiast, which I am permitted to print.

MY DEAR LOWNE,—Poor dear Phelps has passed away. When I read the account in bed this morning, I turned on my pillow, and had a good long think of the good old man, and my eyes were very red when I looked in the glass. His death has touched me very much. I had a great regard for him; he has done great good.

"I thought some time ago, when I saw his Farewell performances announced at Drury Lane, how I would try and arrange to go with you to see his Farewell, as we did together at Macready's.

"His has been a good life, and I believe he is in a better world.

"Charles Mathews died just six months ago. How well I remember when we three were photographed together in Regent Street in our 'John Bull' characters; two great men gone, and this little one left to play his part a little longer. I wish you would find out when the funeral takes place. How much I regret not being able to pay the last mark of respect to one for whom I had so great an esteem and regard.

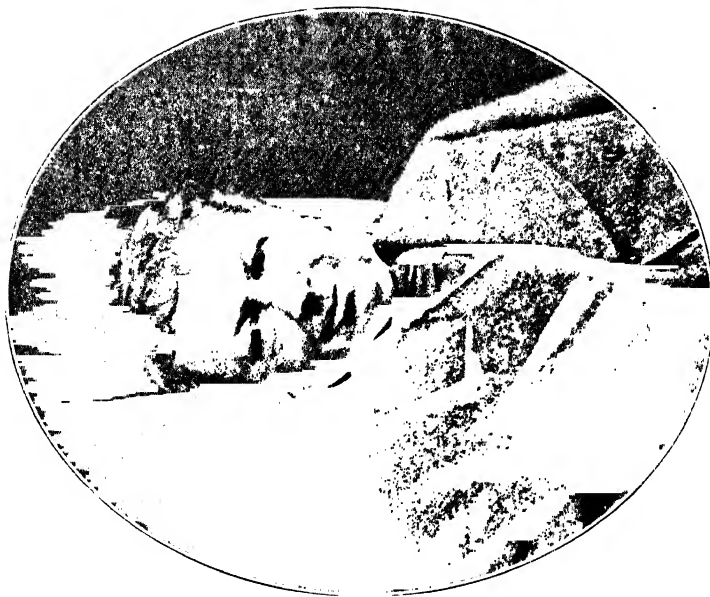
"Yours sincerely,

"J. L. TOOLE."

The same kindly heart was as deeply touched when Johnny Toole, whilst acting at Manchester, heard of "the passing" of Charles Mathews. The occasion suggested another affectionate letter, which is interesting in connection with our faithful friend's long and distressing illness, borne with such noble and patient fortitude.



J. L. Tootle.  
(Caleb Plummer.)



*Photo by*  
BUCKSTONE.

[H. C. D. Dorney.]





My dear friend, I finished heavy last night, played Uncle Plummer and Charles, but felt very sad. After my first scene, when I came off the stage, young Charles Mathews was at the wing waiting for me to tell me that his father was very bad, and sinking gradually. The clergyman had been with him at his request, and they had been praying together. I had to go on to finish the scene, and whilst the audience were roaring with laughter at me, the tears were welling up to my eyes, for I was thinking of the poor dear fellow who was passing away, and who for years has given such delight to tens of thousands, all over the world. What a brilliant light he has been, and what a name the stage will lose! He sent me a message thanking me for a little attention in sending him some grapes, which his son said had pleased him.

"I have just heard this morning that he is sinking rapidly, and before you receive this there may be no Charles Mathews. God's will be done. I feel very much; he was always very kind to me.

"Yours sincerely,

"J. L. TOOLE."

The following day Mr. Toole telegraphed to Mr. Lowe:—

"Very sorry I cannot attend funeral of Charles Mathews, Saturday, at Kensal Green. Wish you would buy wreath of flowers to place on his coffin, and send it for me. I should so much have wished to pay my last mark of respect to his memory."

## CHAPTER VII

### “THE EARLY STRUGGLE OF CHARLES KEAN !”

ENTER Charles John Kean ! Ladies and gentlemen, his is a most worthy name, and he is justly entitled to your earnest consideration and your most generous applause. His temper, his tact, and his talent have been discussed again and again. His excessive vanity has been ridiculed, his tetchiness has been enlarged upon, his ambition has been laughed to scorn ; but, after all, how few actors we have known could put their hand on their hearts and say, “*I am not vain.*” “No one can accuse *me* of sensitiveness.” “To be criticised well or ill is the joy of my life and of my existence; ambition has never in any way influenced my course of action.”

Charles Kean was born at Waterford in the year 1811, in the old struggling days of his gloriously-erratic father ; carried “pickaback” over and over again no doubt by the mighty Edmund and his toiling, patient wife along the roads and lanes of old England ; the sleepy child exchanged for the wallet and the stick ; educated at Eton, in accordance with that enthusiastic promise, when the long-anticipated and oft-delayed triumph came.

Charles Kean, the student, the antiquarian and the

scholar; Charles Kean, whose work on the stage was so admirable, so conscientious, so splendidly dutiful to Shakespeare, and whose departure from it was deplored by the greatest politicians and scholars of that time, the noble Duke of Newcastle, Colonial Secretary, who was the guide, companion, and counsellor of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales when he first visited Canada and America; Lord Carlisle, the poet statesman; William Ewart Gladstone, a staunch lover of actors; and who shall deny to Charles Kean the merit of building—and building very firmly with all his strength and all his heart—a grand wing in that temple of the drama that we look up to and venerate to-day?

Do not let us forget these valiant pioneers when we applaud the perfecting or the promise. It never was, and never could be, one man's work and one man's work alone. We commend such master builders as the Kembles, William Charles Macready, Samuel Phelps, Henry Irving; but with them must ever be associated the name of Charles Kean. Indeed, his task at the Princess's was perhaps more difficult than that of any of them, because the masses of thicket and brushwood that he had to hack through were more tangled and more obstinately resistful. The path was not made smooth or even straight for Charles Kean. The "palmy days of the drama" exist at every age; but the palms were cruelly parched and withered, and the stage of England in a very sorry state indeed when Charles Kean with set teeth came to its assistance.

In alluding to the master builders we must never forget the foremen who stood by their side—the actors, who flashed suddenly like brilliant meteors in the sky, and possibly by their own error disappeared from the horizon all too soon. Three or four names naturally occur to

me—Edmund Kean, Gustavus V. Brooke, who died so nobly in the open storm-tossed sea, Frederick Robson, and several others. Amongst these the immediate predecessor of Edmund Kean is often forgotten. I allude to George Frederick Cooke, whose acting has again and again been described to me as something electric and magnificent. The names of George Frederick Cooke and Gustavus Brooke are to-day invariably alluded to with a sigh. But, for all that, they were mighty actors. The Othello of Gustavus Brooke, even at the despairing point of his career, was a performance to remember. What a voice, what a power, what a resonance, what a grand style! Othello should never be attempted by the feeble and the finicking representative of modern realistic art.

As to Cooke, he has been briefly but well described in the following words by the biographer of Charles Kean :—

“The secession of Garrick in 1776 made way for Henderson, who did wonders in defiance of more physical deficiencies than even those of Lekain, the great French Roscius. But he was cut off prematurely by an accident in 1785, before he had completed his thirty-eighth year. His wife gave him a wrong medicine by mistake, an embrocation instead of a draught, which killed him. She was never made acquainted with the immediate cause of his death. Then the Kemble dynasty reigned for more than a quarter of a century in acknowledged supremacy. George Frederick Cooke came like a meteor in 1800, and, as he said himself, ‘made black Jack tremble in his shoes,’ but irregular habits marred his fortunes, and enfeebled his genius. In 1810 he departed for America,

whence he returned no more. His death took place at New York on the 26th of September, 1812. The physician who attended him in his last illness said that systematic intemperance had destroyed one of the finest constitutions that man could have possessed. Edmund Kean, who partly modelled himself on Cooke, and surpassed his original, erected a monument to his memory when he visited the New World.

"When sober and himself, Cooke was not only a great actor, but a well-bred gentleman in appearance and manner and conversation. When drunk he degenerated into a noisy, brutal bacchanal, fit only to herd with the rout of Comus or Silenus. His style was as opposite to that of Kemble as can possibly be conceived. It was fiery impulsive energy, opposed to dignified collectedness; quick, impassioned utterance, instead of regulated intonation; epigrammatic terseness and pungency, in place of lofty eloquence; rapid motion and gesticulation, rather than studied attitudes of lengthened pauses. Deficient in artificial refinement, he sought to be natural. In a soliloquy, he was eminently effective. Instead of flourishing about and crossing the stage backwards and forwards, as many actors do, he concentrated himself and stood almost motionless, not addressing the audience or making them a party to his thoughts, but wrapped up in a kind of self-conference, in which the soliloquiser may be said to be communing with his own soul.

"Cooke was not gifted with the elegant figure and deportment of John Kemble. His arms were short, and his movements abrupt and angular. His features were powerfully expressive of the darker passions, and he had a strong vein of sarcastic humour. His voice, though somewhat high and sharp in its ordinary tone,

possessed great compass, and carried him without failure through the most arduous characters; a pre-eminence over his rival in which he absolutely revelled, and never omitted to exercise when he found an opportunity. His best parts were Iago, Richard the Third, Glendalvon, Shylock, Stukeley, Sir Giles Overreach, Kiteley, Sir Archy MacSarcasm, and Sir Pertinax MacSycophant. The latter as a whole may be considered one of the most complete pictures ever presented on the stage. Mr. Phelps must be quoted here as a brilliant exception. He never could have seen Cooke play Sir Pertinax, but the performance was a revelation. Those who have seen it (and a few still survive) can never forget the impression it left upon them. Of Cooke's many followers, the late Charles Young was the only one who recalled their prototype in this particular character. All the others were either tame, or outrageously coarse, without humour. King George the Third commanded the 'Man of the World' five times in two seasons, and declared that Cooke's Sir Pertinax surpassed all that he recollected of Garrick in his very best assumptions. Cooke's genius confined itself to a narrow range. It was well remarked by a critic of the day that he did not play many parts to perfection, but that he played those in which he really excelled better than anybody else. That critic had not then seen Edmund Kean, who went beyond Cooke in Shylock, Richard, and Sir Giles Overreach, not to speak of his Othello, in which he stood alone and unapproachable."

The name of Charles Kean, who, in infancy, had shared the burden of his parents' troubles, dragged about from booth to barn, soothed as best she could by his brave and patient mother, whilst the "little man

with the capes" played Richard the Third and Harlequin the same night, and in the daytime earned an honest penny by teaching fencing and boxing to the "Corinthians" *en route*, must ever be associated with that great and memorable evening, that wonderful Wednesday, January 26th, 1814, at old Drury, when the long-delayed triumph came, and the name of Edmund Kean burst on the astonished and delighted world.

We can all picture it, though it occurred years and years before the majority of us were born. We can hear the eager little actor, all nerves and muscle, saying, "Let me but once get upon the boards of old Drury with the footlights before me, and I will show them what I can do."

Many had said the same thing before, and many have said or thought it since, and many more will continue saying it until the end of time; but not with the same right as Edmund Kean. There in a corner, sympathetically anxious, we can see old Dr. Drury, who said to Kean next day, "I could scarcely draw my breath when you entered, but directly you took your position and leaned upon your cane, I saw that all was right."

The house was a small one, almost as small as the audience that, in the after time, welcomed Henry Irving in "The Bells," but what it lacked in number it made up for in enthusiasm. "How the devil so few of them kicked up such a row was marvellous," muttered old Oxberry, whose play editions we so justly prize in our libraries to-day. We can guess the astonishment that fell upon the audience which heard these words of Shylock spoken with a meaning and manner that had



never been given them before, much to the alarm of the orthodox old playgoer—

“Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last,  
You spurned me such a day : another time  
You called me *dog* : and for these *courtesies*  
I'll lend you this much monies !”

From that moment the triumph of the actor was secure. The curtain fell. Brother actors, and sister actresses, ever generous to a comrade, pressed forward to offer their congratulations. “The magnates still kept at a distance, from jealousy or disappointment.” Mr. Arnold sent for Kean to the manager's room, and said, rather coldly and formally, “You have exceeded our expectations, sir ; the play will be repeated next Wednesday.” For all this Edmund Kean cared little. His heart was on flame : he was dying to carry the good news himself, and no one but himself, to the sweet and faithful wife at home, who was watching and waiting by his little son's cradle, and who had dismissed her husband with an affectionate kiss for good luck, when he had gone off to his duties at the theatre.

We can see, in imagination, the brilliant actor hurrying on those famous capes, rushing out of the theatre, waving aside all compliments, and flinging himself into the arms of that dear companion, who had tramped side by side with him in all weathers, and shared without a murmur his almost intolerable privations, conscious as she was that his was not talent in the accepted term, but something far greater than that.

Out comes the child, the future Charles Kean, from his cradle ; and, embracing first one and then the other with tears of joy, up sprang from his heart of hearts those memorable words, “Now, Mary, you shall ride in your carriage, and Charles shall go to Eton.”

There was but one cloud of sorrow that shadowed that bright sun of success. The triumphant actor thought of the terrible pain borne in silence by his uncomplaining wife, the loss of her first child; and kissing her once more, with what deep affection and emotion he must have said—

"Oh! if Howard had been here!"

Although it was at old Sadler's Wells Theatre that I saw my first Hamlet, and was there absorbed with the enchanting mystery of playgoing, here, at the old Princess's, with Charles Kean in command, so far as I was concerned, originally began my overmastering passion for the play that has pursued me all my life. There have been few theatres in London at which I have spent happier hours than at the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, from first to last. It always seemed to me vaster, larger, and more important than the old Islington playhouse.

Gone, and never to be restored again, were the little houses on each side of the proscenium, with doors and brass knockers and a window overhead with a lace or muslin blind, a row of red flower pots on a sill, in which were planted artificial flowers of impossible colours and shapes. You can see it all in George Cruickshank's pictures that illustrated the "Life of Joey Grimaldi" by Charles Dickens. I used to love that old proscenium door from which all the actors and actresses invariably took their call. They did not file across the stage two and two, principals first, subordinates last, or *vice versa*; they were not discovered in a group with fixed smiles, linked hand in hand, making stereotyped bows as now, massed together in a pre-arranged picture duly rehearsed beforehand.

No ; they all came out of that dear little green proscenium door with the brass knocker, just the kind of door belonging to such a house as Charles Lamb must have inhabited in Colebrooke Row, Lower Road, Islington, facing the New River, where I used to wander as a child, and longed to possess so cosy and peaceful a tenement.

I think I am right in saying that the proscenium door, which dates as far back as the earliest Greek plays, disappeared for ever with the old Sadler's Wells Theatre. Clown and Pantaloon have no house now at which to knock ; actors and actresses have no home from which to appear and to take their cheers, and so return to what would otherwise be the broken illusion of the scene.

When home for the holidays from Marlborough in the fifties, I always managed to get to the Princess's Theatre, somehow or other. It was a kind of " pious fraud " which my father encouraged, for he had presented me with my first Shakespeare, bound in Russian leather, a treasure book which I possess to this day. Apparently, he wanted me to understand and appreciate Shakespeare as well on the stage as in the study. He was a great student himself, a brilliant scholar, and a man of liberal views on many subjects.

It was only a very few years ago I discovered that my father, an orthodox, and, well perhaps a litigious clergyman, prone to controversy, a hard and fast fighter when he felt he was in the right, and a hater of anything savouring of injustice, had distinguished himself as a dramatic critic, and had earned accidentally the warm approval of Charles Kean. So you see that the Church and the Stage were obviously in a kind of harmony even then. A clergyman, who was a journalist also, had no

objection to sit in the stalls or in a box to note, admire, and criticise with the aid of his acquired knowledge the King Lear of Charles Kean.

I knew that my father was all his life a controversialist, that he had been editor of the *Christian Remembrancer*, the great Anglican magazine that flourished in the early fifties; that he had buried himself deep in various works of Anglo-Catholic theology; that he had sparred to the death with the Rev. Daniel Wilson, the evangelical vicar of Islington, who detested Puseyism in any form; that he had been one of the most brilliant of the leader writers of the old *Morning Chronicle*, in the Peelite days of the Duke of Newcastle, Sidney Herbert, who gave me my appointment in the War Office when he was Secretary of State; Alexander James Beresford Hope, Angus Reach, and John Douglas Cook: that he had written the prospectus for the first *Saturday Review*, and wrote regularly every week for that successful periodical up to the day of his death; but I must own that it surprised me that he, a clergyman, had added to his multifarious labours that of dramatic critic.

It appears that in the year 1858 duty or inclination took him to the Princess's Theatre, to see Charles Kean act King Lear. It was a very learned criticism from the scholarly point of view, and from the attitude of the Shakespearean student; at any rate, it evidently pleased Charles Kean, who wrote as follows to John Douglas Cook, my father's editor.

"MY DEAR COOK,—To say I am very much gratified by the remarks in the *Saturday Review* on my acting of Lear, would convey but a slight notion of how deeply indebted I feel to you and the author for such a critique in such a journal.

"A notice written with such power and in so influential a quarter must tend to the advancement of my position as an actor, and the establishment of my reputation on its most solid basis. I hope you will do me the favour of making the critic aware of how much I feel my obligation to him, and, my dear friend, accept yourself my warmest expressions of gratitude.

"I am so well pleased that I will not cavil with points in the early portion of the notice, where I am under an impression that I am justified by my antiquarian knowledge. These are to me, under present circumstances, but minor considerations. I have been honoured with the praise of my *acting* in the *Saturday Review*, which has had the effect of some sort of *hysterica passio*.

"Believe me, my dear Cook,

"Sincerely and gratefully yours,

"C. KEAN.

"26th April, 1858."

Is not this characteristic of the actor in every line? Charles Kean was so well pleased to have his acting praised that he did not care to cavil at what he considered was the writer's evident want of "antiquarian knowledge." How surprised he would have been to learn that his critic on this occasion, Parson Scott of Hoxton, was deeper versed in "antiquarian knowledge" than most men of his time, that he had edited the *Ecclesiologist*, that he possessed a well-ordered mind, and was accuracy itself! However, Charles Kean was satisfied with the praise of his acting by my father, who confessedly knew nothing of the subject at all, while he disputed his "antiquarian knowledge," of which his critic was an expert, a master, and professor.

On the plea then of an earnest desire to become a diligent student of Shakespeare, frequent visits to the Princess's Theatre during both summer and winter holidays were willingly permitted me; and I loved nothing better than to go alone to the pit, where in some comfortable corner undisturbed I witnessed and pondered over such splendid revivals as "The Winter's Tale," "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," "Richard the Second," and many more Shakespearean plays, and became acquainted for the first time with Louis XI. as played by Charles Kean, and the entrancing "Corsican Brothers," whose weird ghost melody, composed by Stoepel, who was afterwards the musical conductor at the Lyceum in the Bateman days, has haunted me ever since. Play me the ghost melody in the "Corsican Brothers," and I can instantly conjure up the whole scene of enchantment.

These youthful playgoing experiences were not without their value, for when I got back to Marlborough I was considered quite an authority on stage matters, and of course never ceased to feast my eyes on the daily theatrical announcements in *The Times*, and the appetising programmes under the clock.

At our weekly debating society, when we had done with "Charles I. *versus* Cromwell," and exhausted ourselves, young Radicals and young Conservatives as well, over the abolition of the game laws, I was of course put up to defend Charles Kean against Samuel Phelps, or *vice versa*, and to have my say on the weighty question whether Shakespeare was or was not far better for the study than the stage. At our Shakespearean readings in our studies after chapel, I was usually presented with the best parts, Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard, and Romeo; for had I not seen them acted,

heard the intonations of the voices of the great actors, and noted their style ?

From that moment the dream of my life was not to become an actor ; no ! such an idea never entered into my head for an instant, but I did earnestly desire to qualify myself for the post of dramatic reviewer of players and plays.

The history of the old Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, that stood on the site of the present building, erected at great cost by Mr. Walter Gooch, and attended with so many disasters, is almost as interesting as that of Old Drury and the Lyceum, both of which theatres have defied change and time, at any rate since I was born.

I am indebted to Mr. E. A. du Plat, still associated with the theatre, for some very comprehensive notes on this subject.

Towards the close of the reign of George IV. Mr. Hamlet, the well-known jeweller in Piccadilly, conceived the idea of combining art and commerce. He accordingly erected at a considerable cost a building on the north side of Oxford Street, in which there should be not only exhibitions of pictures and other works of art, but also stalls at which the visitors could purchase many useful articles, such as embroidered handkerchiefs, marking ink, imitation jewellery, carved ivory, and puzzles that one of course always yearns for when visiting a picture gallery.

To this speculation Mr. Hamlet gave the simple title of "The Royal Bazaar, British Diorama, and Exhibition of Works of Art." The first pictures in the diorama were the wreck of an "Indiaman" and "Storm on the Coast," with sensational effects of course ; "Lago

Maggiore," the "Interior of St. George's Chapel, Windsor," and the "Ruins of Tintern Abbey" by moonlight. These pictures were the work of Clarkson Stansfield and David Roberts.

The Bazaar, which must have been the sober ancestor of the Soho Bazaar, which exists to this day, and the London Crystal Palace, close to Regent's Circus, which was the rendezvous of Government clerks in winter evenings thirty odd years ago, where we listened to a musical entertainment, and, I suppose, flirted with the pretty stall girls, was opened in the spring of 1828, and was declared to be under the special patronage of his Majesty George IV.

It had but a short existence, for on the 27th of May in the following year it was burnt to the ground and everything destroyed. By a curious coincidence, one of the pictures represented the destruction of York Minster by fire. The total loss was estimated at £50,000. They were prompt at the rebuilding; and in 1830, Mr. Reinagle, the Royal Academician, exhibited a collection of his well-known pictures in the new Royal Bazaar. A few years later the place was renamed the Queen's Bazaar, after Queen Adelaide. The place failed to attract, and after a good many ups and downs it was decided to turn it into a theatre.

It was originally intended that the place should be called the Court Theatre, but at the last moment it was decided it should be called the Princess's. The career of the building towards becoming a temple of the drama was beset by many difficulties, but they were overcome, and eventually it was opened by Mr. Welby in September, 1840, with a series of promenade concerts. These were not a great success, for there was no room to



promenade, somewhat of an essential for such entertainments ; and poor Mr. Hamlet became bankrupt, his theatre being sold for £14,500.

In 1842, Mr. J. M. Maddox became the lessee, at a rental of under £2,000 a year ; and on Boxing Day, 1842, the first dramatic performance took place at the Princess's. The programme consisted of "*La Sonnambula*," and a burlesque by Gilbert A'Beckett, entitled "*The Yellow Dwarf*." In this last Madame Sala took one of the principal parts, whilst it may be noticed that her talented son, George Augustus Sala, was at the time employed on the stage as an assistant scene painter. During the first year, Wright, Paul Bedford, Wieland, Oxberry, and Braham, figured in the bills, and in the following December Mr. and Mrs. Keeley joined the company. Of the art of Wieland, the pantomimist, as I have said before, my old friend E. L. Blanchard had the highest appreciation.

Mr. Hamlet, already mentioned, the once famous silversmith of Cranbourne Alley, the "*Mr. Polonius*" of Thackeray, after his terrible losses at the Princess's Theatre was admitted eventually through interest as a Brother of the Charter House, where he died, as Colonel Newcome had died before him, with "*Adsum*" on his lips. Many celebrated characters and men of letters have sheltered in this hospitable almshouse, and died under the shadows of its old grey walls, their black gowns hanging up on a peg by their lonely beds, and with no more complaints to make against the constituted authorities. Here rested amongst others, and most of them here died, Moncrieff, the prolific dramatist and the stage adapter of Pierce Egan's famous "*Life in London*," with its Tom and Jerry and Dusty Sal ; Monk Mason, some time lessee of the Italian Opera House, who

ascended with Mr. Green in the Nassau balloon ; John Sheehan, the Irish Whisky Drinker of the *Temple Bar Magazine*, and three celebrated men with whom I was intimately acquainted.

They were Dr. G. L. M. Strauss, of the Savage Club, a learned professor, very argumentative, who was taken off by Tom Robertson in the club scene in "Society" as Dr. Makvicz ; John Abraham Heraud, a writer of epic poems and for many years the dramatic critic of the *Athenæum* and the *Illustrated London News*, on which paper I succeeded him as the writer of an article called "The Playhouses" ; and dear old John Maddison Morton, the farce writer and author of the immortal farce "Box and Cox," which, though sounding so thoroughly English, was based on two French farces, "Frisette" and "La Chambre a deux Lits." During the last years of his life, when Maddison Morton was a Brother of the Charter House, we became the dearest and closest of friends. In fact, his death, which so resembled that of Colonel Newcome, very nearly occurred in my presence.

I first met Maddison Morton at the house of my friend Robert Reece in Eton Road, Haverstock Hill, where, by the way, a few doors off Tom Robertson died. The author of "Box and Cox," and Bob Reece, the burlesque writer, musician, and satirist, were both members of the Dramatic Authors' Society, and after their meetings they used to come home to an early dinner at Reece's house. There I was ever a welcome guest, and those dinners were delightful pauses in my busy life. There never was a man who looked less like a comic dramatist and man of letters than Maddison Morton. With his bright red pippin apple face, clear complexion and distinguished air, he looked like

a country squire of the old school. A more courteous old gentleman I never met. He was passionately fond of fishing, and he took snuff in abundance and in last century style. When evil days came upon him and he had sold all his copyrights that had not lapsed in course of time, they took him into the Charter House.

I do not think he was ever really happy there. He hated the confinement, the absence of liberty, but most of all he detested his companions, who were not, he assured me, broken-down men of letters or even educated men, but retired butlers, valets and the servants of influential men and aristocrats, put in the Charter House to save the family pension.

Before he died, this "fine old English gentleman, one of the olden time," often used to toddle on fine spring or summer mornings from the Charter House to my chambers at 52 Lincoln's Inn Fields, for he loved a chat with me and to know what was going on in the theatrical world, to which he was still attached. He had a grand scheme in his head for allowing the Charter House Brethren to stay out and enjoy a small pension elsewhere—anything to relieve some of them who knew what freedom was, from chapel, roll calls, and that "infernal black gown," as he called it.

He sent for me just before he died, for I was much attached to the dear old man, and had been able to do him some little kindness. We had a very sad parting, for we both knew that we should never meet again on this earth.

He pressed my hand very affectionately as I leaned over the pillow to catch his last words, and what I thought every minute would be his dying breath.

"Good-bye! God bless you, old friend," he murmured, half in his death sleep. "Box and Cox! Box

and Cox! Try and keep the memory of the old man green."

I am trying to do so now. I have kept my word!

On the occasion of a complimentary benefit to Maddison Morton, shortly before his death, I was asked to write some Auld Lang Syne verses on the subject of this grand old man. Here are a few stanzas:—

" Good friends! before you pass away,  
And ere we drop the curtain,  
There's one thing I am asked to say,  
Which you will cheer—that's certain!  
If I were host, I'd pledge a toast  
To shake the roof and rafter,  
In praise of one who lauded fun  
And consecrated laughter!

" If wine were here we'd drink to him  
Without more fuss or parley,  
And o'er the glass discuss the whim  
Of Compton and of Harley;  
Alas! the Harp is mute, I trow,  
We touched in Halls of Tara,  
But few allude to Buckstone now,  
And none to Macnamara!

" Dear friends of old we often miss,  
On both sides the Equator,  
But there no *acti temporis*  
Let me be the *Laudator*!  
For one is left—who then and now  
No pessimists retort on,  
The son of English 'Speed the Plough,'  
Old Box and Cox's Morton!"

To give the list of operas, burlesques, and plays that followed in the early days of the Princess's Theatre would be tedious; the programme was frequently changed, and it is evident that the audience must have had their money's worth, for it would have been impossible to have played the pieces set down in less time than four or five hours, and indeed this was the rule,

for the doors opened at 6.30, and the performance often lasted till after midnight.

In 1845, Macready made his re-appearance after his unfortunate American tour. An enormous audience had assembled, and so great was the crush that the orchestra was invaded, and the players had to seek refuge under the stage. One who was present informs me that the greeting, which was intended to make amends for the somewhat hostile reception Macready had met with in the States, was immense, and that it was fully five minutes before he could go on with his lines. The part played by the great actor on this occasion was Hamlet. The first pantomime played at the Princess's was produced at Christmas, 1846, and was called "The Key of the Kingdom; or, the Enchanted Beauties of the Golden Castle."

Many good stories are told of the manager Maddox, whose real name was Medex, the brother of an Oxford Street tobacconist. His solecisms are as often quoted as those of John Stetson of America, or of old Mrs. Swanborough, of the Strand Theatre, upon whom were fastened most of H. J. Byron's wildest jokes. When Byron was present, a new Mrs. Swanborough story was eagerly expected. She was an amiable old lady, much loved by her children, and I don't suppose she said one half of the things that were fathered on her. Her delight was to sit in a corner of the dress circle at the Strand Theatre to watch the same performance night after night, and to "count the house,"—a kind of Mrs. Jarley of theatrical life.

One morning at the Princess's Theatre the conductor was rehearsing his band, and old Medex was on the stage, worrying and fidgeting about as usual, when his eagle eye rested on one of the musicians, probably the

flautist, who was not playing. "Stop the band ! stop the band !" shouted Medex ; and then he went up and pointed to the astonished musician, shaking his fist at him over the footlights.

"Look you here, sir, you idle fellow, you disreputable rascal, you're not playing ; vy are you not playing de music like de others ?"

"Please, sir, I have ten bars rest here."

"Oh have you ? den out you go, out you go ! I never heard ob such a scandlous ting. Ten bars rest indeed ! I pay my music makers to play and not to rest—out you go !"

On one occasion a famous Hamlet adopted the old stage tradition of coming on in the Ophelia scene ungartered and with disordered hose. Medex rated him soundly, and said it was an untidy, dirty habit, and his audience would not like it, especially the ladies.

"But, sir," observed the actor, "those are the directions of Shakespeare !"

"I won't allow no Mr. Shakespeare to give directions here. I am master of my own theatre, and I won't allow any Mr. Shakespeare to come and interfere with my business, that's all about it, so now you know—and who's dis Shakespeare anyhow, the silly idiot, he don't know nothing about it anyway—pull up your stockings, man, and be decent."

George Augustus Sala must have had a curious position in the theatre in the days of Medex ; he helped to paint the scenery and to adapt the plays, and for both offices his remuneration was uncommonly small, but he was deeply attached to his mother, Madame Sala, and to his only brother, Wynn, who was one of the subordinate actors at the Princess's for many years.

The name of Macready was like a red rag to a bull in the case of Sala. He could scarcely bear to hear his name mentioned at all, because he maintained that the great actor ill-treated his brother on every possible occasion, pooh-poohed his talent, and helped to break his heart.

It is true no doubt that Macready called the luckless Wynn, "beast," "brute," "villain," and so on, and ostensibly treated him with contempt; but from others I have heard that this was a sort of savage irony, it was a rage assumed, and Macready, aside, grimly chuckled over the despair of poor nervous Charles Wynn. In reality, so I was informed, Macready had the greatest possible faith in Wynn's judgment, and always sent for him to his room after a special performance, in order that he might tell Macready how he had acted. This Wynn did, very frankly and freely, and he was always dismissed with a grunt, and "Now you may go, *beast!*"

The Medex management was not distinguished for its liberality. In fact, parsimony was a mild word to use in connection with it. It was almost as bad as that of a famous management in the Strand, where the lessee, notorious for his stinginess, revised the salary list, and deliberately cut off a halfpenny charged for cat's meat per day for the black theatrical meow-meow! Alas, poor pussy! the beloved mascotte at such establishments.

Macready on one occasion was to play Cardinal Wolsey in "Henry the Eighth," and Charles Wynn was cast for Cardinal Campeius. Knowing the "nearness" of the management, Macready was afraid that Cardinal Campeius would be ridiculously or inaccurately dressed, and would look contemptible beside Cardinal Wolsey's

gorgeous attire, so he asked Sala's brother to come to his room when he was "fixed" to show himself off. Wynn had been at the greatest trouble to make the most of the material given to him.

Silk and lace were out of the question, but for the latter Wynn had contrived a deep flounce, over the rose-pink garment, of white patterned perforated paper. When he was fully equipped, he tapped at Macready's door, and was desired to enter. The great man was sitting before a long mirror making up his face. He didn't deign to turn round, but surveying the reflection of Cardinal Campeius in the looking glass, muttered savagely between his closed teeth, "Mother Shipton, by God!"

There is another good story told by Sala of the parsimony of Maddox.

"Macready exulted in his histrionic triumphs, yet he seemed to hate and to be ashamed of his profession; nor would he ever suffer his children to witness plays in which he himself performed. In private life, where I never met him, he is said to have been a courteous and polished gentleman, the beloved friend of Dickens, of Jerrold, of Forster, of Stone, of Bulwer, and of Maclise. It is curious likewise to recall that he was extremely popular with the subordinate employees of the theatre. One carpenter, I remember, he always 'tipped' with a sovereign at the beginning of every season, saying: 'Thomas Heaford, I am glad to see you; and you are an honest man'; and he would shake hands with Tom Heaford. It was only on the professional votaries of the sock and buskin that he poured the vials of his wrath. With Maddox he never openly quarrelled; and, indeed, on one occasion that doughty little manager



had the courage to rebuke him at rehearsal for the unseemly language which he had been using ; although he somewhat inconsistently concluded his remonstrance by saying : ‘ It’s such a d——d bad example ! ’

“ Macready was not a sayer of good things ; although upon occasion he could be droll ; and he was truly comic in such parts as Doricourt in ‘ The Belle’s Stratagem,’ and James of Scotland in ‘ The King of the Commons.’ One certainly humorous remark he made to my brother when Sir Henry Taylor’s splendid but unactable drama, ‘ Philip von Artevelde,’ was produced at the Princess’s. Maddox spent what was then considered a very large sum of money on the production of this piece ; and on the first night, in the famous market-place scene, where a riotous and famine-stricken mob were introduced, there were as many as a hundred and fifty ‘ supers ’ on the stage.

“ Sir Henry Taylor’s play was not precisely damned, but it fell dismally flat ; and on the second night of its performance Maddox, always of a frugal mind, cut down the number of ‘ supers ’ to about forty. I forget what part my brother played, but in the market-place scene, Macready had to lean on Charles’s shoulder ; and as he did so, pointing towards the sadly diminished crowd, he whispered to him : ‘ Famine has done its work, beast ! ’ ”

From the 1st of October, 1827, when Charles Kean made his first appearance at Drury Lane as young Norval in Home’s tragedy of “ Douglas,” to the year 1850, when in partnership with Robert Keeley he became manager and lessee of the Princess’s Theatre, the career of the young actor was one of almost incessant disaster and disappointment. If ever an actor

suffered from being the son of such a father and bearing such a name, Charles Kean did. For years and years the Press condemned him almost to a man. Letters of sarcasm were sent to Edmund Kean imploring him to take the boy off the stage, where he was said to be making himself extremely ridiculous.

"My conclusion is," said one authority, alluding to young Norval, "that it was just such a performance as would have been highly creditable to a schoolboy acting in conjunction with his companions for the amusement of their parents on 'breaking up' day, and nothing beyond this. His speech, 'My name is Norval, on the Grampian Hills, &c.,' he hurried and spoke as though he had a cold in his head, or was pressing his finger against his nose."

This fault, detected as far back as 1827, Charles Kean never mastered to the day of his death. Every actor of importance has a decided mannerism, or some trick of voice or gesture, by which he is distinguished or recognised. Macready and Samuel Phelps both had them very strongly marked. Macready was always grunting and groaning. Samuel Phelps was invariably catching fleas in his chest. The manner of Charles Kean was to talk as if he had a cold in his head. A throat or nose specialist of to-day would probably have remedied this defect in five minutes. I may remark here that the Macready manner was imitated to such a ridiculous extent by actors of little brain and less talent that it retarded the advance of natural acting for many years. The grunTERS and growlers were only routed by Fechter.

The good people of Dublin and America, where he toured successfully for some years, were far kinder to Charles Kean at the outset than were his London

audiences. However, he toiled and struggled on, making his first great success as Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest." When I was a boy I saw him play the part at the Princess's Theatre with J. F. Cathcart, who is still alive, and was much impressed with the grim tragedy, which was always played, as were all tragedies then, on a carpet of green baize. A green baize carpet always meant appalling tragedy; the reason why I have never discovered. But the custom eventually disappeared. When Henry Irving played Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest" at the Lyceum there was certainly no green baize carpet.

Edmund Kean, the father, and Charles Kean, the son, acted together for the first and—as fate would have it—for the last time in London on the 25th of March, 1833. The play was "Othello"; Edmund Kean was of course the Moor, Charles Kean, Iago, and Ellen Tree, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean, and the companion of his life, Desdemona.

This was a memorable occasion. It was the last time that Edmund Kean ever acted, and, as in the case of Samuel Phelps years afterwards, he was within an ace of dying on the stage. Let Barry Cornwall describe this dramatic scene:—

"There was no rehearsal nor any arrangement as to the mode of the play, but when the son arrived at the theatre in the evening, he was told that his father desired to see him. He went accordingly to his dressing-room and found him shivering and exceedingly weak. 'I am very ill,' he said; 'I am afraid I shall not be able to act.' The actors who were present cheered him up; but to provide against the worst a servant was desired to air a dress (such as Othello wears), in

order that Mr. Warde might take up the part in case Kean should actually break down before the conclusion.

"The play commenced. After the first scene Kean observed, 'Charles is getting on to-night, he's acting very well; I suppose that's because he is acting with me.' He himself was very feeble. He was, however, persuaded to proceed, and brandy and water was administered to him as usual. By this help he went on pretty well until the commencement of the third act; but before the drop-curtain rose he said to his son, 'Mind, Charles, that you keep before me; don't get behind me in this act. I don't know that I shall be able to kneel; but if I do, be sure that you lift me up.' Still, he pursued his way without faltering. He went off with Desdemona, and no one observed any change. But, on entering again, when he says, 'What! false to *me*! &c.,' he was scarcely able to walk across the stage. He held up, however, until the celebrated 'Farewell,' which he uttered with all his former pathos; but on concluding it, after making one or two steps towards his son (who took care to be near him), and attempting the speech, 'Villain, be sure, &c.,' his head sank on his son's shoulder, and the tragedian's acting was at an end.

"He was able to groan out a few words in Charles's ear, 'I am dying—speak to them for me,' after which (the audience refusing in kindness to hear any apology) he was borne from the stage. His son, assisted by other persons, carried him to his dressing-room, and laid him on the sofa. He was as cold as ice, his pulse was scarcely perceptible, and he was unconscious of all that was going on around him. In this state he remained some time, when the remedies which were applied having restored him to his senses, he was taken to the Wrekin tavern near the theatre, and

Messrs. Carpue and Duchez (the surgeons) were sent for."

After a week's stay he was removed to Richmond, when he rallied a little, and was able to go out in a carriage. But the weather was cold, and he fancied that this airing gave him his death-blow. On the 15th of May he died. During this last and fatal illness the "great little man" was visited by the present devoted patron of the play-house, and friend of every artist of her time. The Baroness Burdett Coutts with her mother arrived at Richmond. The question was asked what delicacy the actor would like, and what he was allowed to drink. The answer was "Gin." "Well," was the reply, "if he drinks gin, he shall have the very best that London can supply." And he had it.

A short time before his death, during an interval of serious reflection, he wrote a penitential and affectionate letter to his wife, entreating her forgiveness and obliteration of the past.

"If I have erred," he said, "it was my head and not my heart, and most severely have I suffered for it. Come home, *forget* and *forgive*." The letter produced the desired effect. Mrs. Kean answered this appeal by proceeding at once to Richmond. She saw her husband once more after seven years of estrangement, and the most perfect reconciliation followed. She went to him again repeatedly, and the best understanding prevailed between them. All this was the work of their son.

I have already described the painful scene at the Aquarium Theatre, when Samuel Phelps, in the character of Cardinal Wolsey, fell dying into the arms of young Norman Robertson. But there are other cases in point.

Fortunately it is rare that real tragedy is witnessed on the dramatic boards, although so far back as the days of Rome, it is said that Julius Cæsar slew an actor dead at his feet.

In the sixteenth century, during the performance of a passion play in Sweden, the representative of the most sacred figure was killed by a spear lance, and falling upon the stage fatally injured one of the actresses. King John II. thereupon drew his sword and slew the player who had caused the first death, whereat the enraged audience, infuriated by the loss of a favourite actor, murdered the monarch.

A conjuror accidentally shot a man on a Dublin stage in 1814; and, six years later, a Madame Linsky was killed through a stage soldier forgetting to take the cartridge out of his musket. At Milan, an actor in "*Antigone*" fell upon his sword so literally that he died; and in 1816, during a performance of "*Modern Antiques; or, the Merry Mourners*," at Drury Lane, a man named George Barnett fired at Miss Kelly, who was playing the part of Nan. He was afterwards found to be insane.

A similar experience was gone through many years afterwards by the late Edwin Booth. Buckstone tells of a tragic incident which happened in an American theatre when he was acting there. An actress named Hamblin followed Mr. Ewin, an actor, into his dressing-room and stabbed him, but the jury acquitted her on the ground that if he had not been stabbed he might have died of heart disease!

In March, 1876, Miss Mabel Hall, an actress at the Theatre Comique, in St. Louis, was shot by a man whose attentions she had rejected; and at a Chinese theatre in California two actors, involved in a love quarrel about an actress, turned a stage fight into a

mortal one. An actor named William Bond was, in the last century, playing Voltaire's "Zaire" at a private theatre in York Buildings, when he died in a chair at the end of the second act. Peg Woffington received a fatal stroke of paralysis as she was speaking the "tag" to "As You Like It," at Covent Garden. Not long afterwards, at Norwich, Joseph Peterson was declaiming the lines of Duke Vincentio in "Measure for Measure":—

"Reason thus with life.

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing

That none but fools would keep; a breath thou art,"

when he fell into another actor's arms, and died immediately. Maria Linley died at Bath in her bed in 1785, while singing "I know that my Redeemer liveth"; and Madame Patey, the splendid contralto and oratorio singer, virtually died as she was ascending the steps of a concert platform. Montfleury, the French tragic actor, died owing to the exertions he made in representing Orestes in the "Andromaque" of Racine; and Molière himself was attacked with a fatal seizure when playing the Hypochondriac in "Le Malade Imaginaire."

One hundred years ago, John Palmer, one of our best light comedians, and the original Joseph Surface, was fulfilling a provincial engagement at Liverpool—in the summer of 1798. "The Stranger" was being prepared for performance, with Palmer as the melancholy and misanthropic hero—rather a strange choice for a comedian! On the morning of the day fixed for its production, Palmer received intelligence of the death of his second son, a youth of much promise, to whom he was greatly attached. Owing to the father's natural grief and distress, the play was postponed for a time. On its subsequent performance his success was so great that a second representation was called for; this took

place on the 2nd of August, 1798, and during it Palmer, according to a contemporary account, "fell a sacrifice to the poignancy of his own feelings, and the audience were doomed to witness a catastrophe which was truly melancholy."

There has been a good deal of discussion as to the precise place in the play at which the tragic occurrence happened. In the account which was at first accepted, it was stated to have been in the fourth act, when Baron Steinfort discovers the unknown recluse to be his old friend Count Waldbourg, and learns from him the reasons for his misanthropy and seclusion. Palmer, it was said, had just uttered the words, "There is another and a better world," when he fell lifeless on the stage. The coincidence was at once seized upon by all who considered the theatre to be a hot-bed of sin and vice, and no doubt Palmer's sudden end was used to point many a moral and adorn many a tale of retributive judgment. The pamphlets published and the sermons preached on this subject lost much of their force when it was shown that the event took place at quite a different passage. The sentence, "There is another and a better world," really occurs in the first scene of the second act, while it is not until the fourth act that Steinfort discovers his friend.

Lady Bancroft gives a pathetic account of the death of that favourite Strand actor, James Rogers.

"I met him at the foot of the stairs, when he placed his hand on my shoulder, and seemed to breathe with great difficulty. I helped him towards the stage, and begged him to sit down. A chair was brought to him; but he declined, saying, in broken sentences, 'I dare not—I shall never—get up again.' He then whispered



to me, 'Marie, dear, help me through it to-night—do what you can for me—I am not well—dear—not at all well.' Not well! No, poor fellow, the end was not far off. He had scarcely breath to speak. I said to him, 'Oh, Jimmy, why did you come here to-night?' 'My fault, dear,' he replied; 'I would come. I shall be all right to-morrow.' His words had such an ominous sound! He could only walk through the piece, leaning upon my shoulder when we were on the stage together. As I found his breath failing him, I either spoke his words or continued with my own.

"Towards the end of the piece his hands became cold, and his face so changed that my heart was sick with fear. The audience little knew that they were laughing at a dying man. How I managed to get through it all I don't know, but necessity makes us strong. I thought the end of the play would never come. He would allow no one but me to help or advise him; indeed, at moments he became fractious, and my task was truly painful. Just as the curtain fell he muttered, 'Thank you, my dear; God bless you and help me!' He sank into a chair, and as I knelt by his side he looked strangely at me, and whispered, 'I am dying.'

"He was taken home, where his poor little wife, to whom he was devoted, had been anxiously waiting for his return. He would not, I heard, allow her to think that he was so ill as he felt, and insisted on going through his work to the last, in defiance of all advice. The end soon came, and his last words were, 'The farce is over—drop the curtain!'"

I have often been told that the seeds of the illness of Jimmy Rogers that eventually caused his death were sown at the Canterbury Music Hall. One night the

actor was carried on the back of Blondin from the gallery to the stage. When half way across Blondin, as was his custom, pretended to slip. This rehearsed effect so frightened a naturally nervous man, that he never recovered it, and his death was hastened thereby.

Very dramatic was the death of Cummins, an actor on the York circuit in the time of Tate Wilkinson. In June, 1817, he was performing at Leeds as Dumont, the heroine's unrecognised husband in "*Jane Shore*." He spoke the lines :

" Be witness for me, ye celestial host,  
Such mercy and pardon as my soul  
Accords to thee, and begs of Heaven to show thee,  
May such befall me at my latest hour  
And make my portion bless'd or curs'd for ever."

At this point he suddenly staggered and dropped dead on the stage, while the audience applauded, taking it to be a part of the acting.

Mrs. Glover—a female Hamlet, by the way—died on the night of her benefit in 1850.

George Honey was seized with fatal paralysis as he went on the stage as Eccles in "*Caste*"; and Bancroft has often told me that, paralysed as he was after his great scene, Honey received a tremendous "call," and they had to prop him up like a dead doll to receive it. He was virtually lifeless when the audience shrieked at his fun and his brothers-in-arms were helping him to his "last call."

During the performance of a play called "*Marked for Life*," at a theatre in Baltimore, in 1875, one of the actresses, Grace Marco, had to read a letter in the course of her part. While doing so she had an attack of heart disease, and died immediately. At the same house, a year or two later, John Ferris had to be

carried off at the wings, to die in a few minutes, murmuring the words, "What is the matter? Can this be death?"

Whenever a tragedy in a theatre is mentioned the murder of President Lincoln by Wilkes Booth, the actor, starts to remembrance. Curiously enough, it was this unhappy man who introduced Charles Wyndham to the John Wood Theatre—the Olympic—in New York.

A few years ago at New Jersey the actor, Frank Frayne, when proceeding to knock an apple off a lady's head in the play "*Si Slocum*," slipped while taking aim for his backward shot from a mirror. The poor woman was killed, and Frayne stood his trial for manslaughter, but was acquitted.

A few years ago, Temple Crosier, an actor at the Novelty, in Great Queen Street, was accidentally, but fatally, stabbed by Wilfred Franks, in the course of a play called "*Sins of the Night*." He was the son of a learned antiquary of the British Museum, who never survived the shock.

A well-known bass vocalist, Mr. Frederici, remembered in connection with the Sullivan operas, was playing Mephistopheles in "*Faust*," in Melbourne, Australia, and died as the fiend made his final descent amid the red fire. Concerning the death of poor Frederici, Charles Warner gives a pathetic and interesting account.

"It was the first night of the production of the opera of '*Faust*.' Miss Nellie Stewart was the Marguerite, and Mr. Frederici the Mephistopheles. I knew Frederici well, and was with him in the afternoon of the fatal night of which I am about to speak. He was distressed

and ill at ease. I tried to console him with cheering words; he turned to me and placed his hand upon my shoulder. 'Warner,' he said, 'I feel sure to-night will be the most eventful one of my life. I feel an indescribable dread. I can't explain it to you. I don't think it is nervousness, although Mephistopheles is a great undertaking. I think I shall succeed, but I dread to-night.' Poor fellow, he had reason to do so! As he sang the last notes and was descending the trap in the last act, the sound of his voice had scarcely died away when he fell lifeless into the arms of the stage hands working beneath.

"At his funeral an extraordinary thing occurred. Amid the breathless silence of the thousands who had followed him to his last resting place, the clergyman came to the passage, 'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' and fell insensible at the foot of the grave. All efforts to revive him were in vain; he was carried senseless from the sacred ground. No other clergyman was present, and I was requested to read the remainder of the service of the dead over my dear friend and comrade. It was a terrible ordeal, enough to unnerve any man. The clergyman died the following day."

At the Elephant and Castle, in 1895, Miss Kitty Tyrrell, the King Cat of the pantomime, died in the theatre on Boxing night, just after she had acknowledged the plaudits of the audience.

M. Castelmarty, the favourite singer, a very short time ago, expired in the arms of M. Jean de Reszke, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, at the end of the first act of "Martha."

As late as March, 1899, another real tragedy occurred on the stage. A German actress named Lolla Banzolla,

who was acting at a Styrian town, called Cilli, suddenly drew a revolver, and exclaiming, "*'Tis love which kills me!*" shot herself in the breast, to the horror of the assembled audience.

One of the best Shakespearean clowns I ever saw, second only to Henry Compton, who was at the Haymarket Theatre under Buckstone for so many years, was John Pritt Harley. A legitimate successor as a comic actor of Munden and Liston, he was a great favourite in whatever theatre he appeared. He, like Phelps and Jimmy Rogers, nearly died upon the stage—of the Princess's Theatre—whilst acting Lancelot Gobbo in "*The Merchant of Venice*," which he played imitably, to the old Gobbo of that fine old actor, Drinkwater Meadows. On Friday, the 20th of August, 1858, he was playing his favourite character in excellent health and spirits. In fact, when asked by a companion that night how he was, the old man—he was 73—replied that he never felt better in his life. He actually skipped across the stage and over the bridge when dismissed by Shylock (Charles Kean); but how few knew on or off the stage that they would see their favourite actor no more, and that he was literally knocking at death's door!

As Harley reached the wings he was seized with paralysis on the left side, and was carried to the green-room and laid upon a sofa. They got him home to Gower Street, where he had led a cheery, contented, bachelor existence for many years, and there in a few hours Harley died. The last coherent words that the dying comedian uttered were from "*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*." He was heard to murmur, "I have

an exposition of sleep come upon me." And he never woke again. Only a few weeks before, his friend and companion Bartley, died at almost the same age from a similar attack.

Grattan Riggs, an admirable exponent of Irish character, died on the stage recently (in Tasmania, I think), and, just before he died, turned to the audience and said, "Don't forget poor Conn"—the character in which he was appearing as the hero of Dion Boucicault's "Shaughraun."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### "THE SUCCESS OF CHARLES KEAN."

IN the year 1848, two years before he assumed the management of the Princess's Theatre, in partnership with his old friend Robert Keeley, a great compliment was paid to Charles Kean.

He was selected, without any application on his part, or the use of any special interest whatever, to conduct and superintend the "Windsor Castle Theatricals," designed by Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince Consort with the double purpose of promoting the interest of the British drama, and of giving pleasure to themselves, the Court, and their personal friends. In Charles Kean was therefore virtually revived the old post of Master of the Revels. Such a compliment was very flattering to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, whose distinguished career and upright, conscientious life were thoroughly appreciated by Her Majesty.

Like Her Majesty's grandfather, King George III., Queen Victoria of England and all her children have always taken the greatest interest in dramatic entertainments of all kinds and were ever enthusiastic patrons of the play. When George III. was King of England, there were "command nights" over and over again at Windsor and Weymouth, to the delight of



CHARLES KEAN.  
(Richard the Second.)





managers as well as actors and actresses, who loved nothing better than such royal patronage. The kindly old King with Queen Charlotte have been known to post all the way from London to Weymouth so as not to disappoint some favourite player to whom they had promised their patronage and presence on the occasion of his benefit.

When it was suggested that His Majesty, to prevent so much personal inconvenience, might have sent a present to the actor instead, the King replied that he could not dream of doing such a thing, as the actor would think much more of the attendance of the King and Queen than any present they could possibly give.

Before the ever-lamented death of H.R.H. the Prince Consort, there was no more enthusiastic playgoer than Her Majesty, and she particularly enjoyed farces and funny plays, and was, of course, an excellent audience. Thanks to the good offices of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who knows more about plays and good acting than most men, and has been the best friend to the players of this and all countries that they ever had, the semi-Court theatricals at Balmoral, Windsor, Osborne, and Sandringham have been partially revived, thus enabling Her Majesty to see the distinguished actors and actresses of what may be called the Henry Irving period of dramatic art.

When Charles Kean was appointed to direct the Court theatricals at Windsor, which were only interrupted by such sad events as the death of Queen Adelaide in 1850, and in 1855 during the anxiety occasioned by the suffering troops at the time of the Crimean War, the arrangement made was that the play of the moment was not to be cast from one given

company, but each part in every play was to be awarded to the actor or actress considered to be most worthy of it by the Master of the Revels.

This cut both ways. It was of great advantage to the entertainment and to those who witnessed it; but it involved poor Charles Kean in endless disputes and jealous bickerings on the part of those who thought they ought to have been selected, but were left out in the cold. It was certainly no bed of roses for Charles Kean.

John Oxenford, in *The Times* of 26th January, 1849, described the Windsor theatricals so clearly and so temperately that he may well be quoted here :—

“For the last month, the plays acted in the Rubens Room at Windsor Castle have afforded a fertile topic of conversation to those who take interest in the proceedings of the Court, and those who discuss the fluctuating fortunes of the British drama. The fact that the Sovereign bespoke a series of English theatrical performances as a recreation in her own palace, has, at least, the charm of novelty to recommend it to the attention of the curious. Fancy has wandered back to the days of Elizabeth and the first James, when such means of amusement were not uncommon; and perhaps, wandering forward, has augured that a new stock of dramatists, worthy to compete with those of the Elizabethan Era, may spring into existence from the effect of the Windsor theatricals.

“With respect to the performances just concluded, they seem to have been conducted in the very best taste, and to have given unequivocal satisfaction to the distinguished auditors. Mr. Charles Kean, under whose direction the whole has taken place, Mr. Grieve, the

head of the decorative department, and the principal performers, have all received the special approbation of Royalty ; and there is no doubt that an entertainment adequate to the Royal wishes has been provided on every occasion.

"The courtly assembly seems to have laid aside that frigidity which is usually the characteristic of private theatricals, and to have applauded with the zeal of a money-paying public, thoroughly pleased with the return of its outlay. It is a fallacy to suppose that a theatrical exhibition can go on briskly without applause. Approbation is the meat, drink, and spirit of the histrionic artist ; and his professional life, without this aliment constantly bestowed, is a dreary waste without an oasis.

"With the large public—the public outside the Castle—the question *à propos* of these theatricals is, whether or not they confer a benefit on the English drama. That the benefit will not be of that immediately palpable nature which would result from a half-a-dozen Royal visits in state, and the crowds consequent thereupon, must, we think, be conceded by any impartial person. But, at the same time, we are inclined to decide that an indirect benefit to the English theatres is far from improbable.

"When the highest personage in the land considers that an English dramatic performance is such an entertainment as to merit the construction of a stage in her own drawing-room, with all the appurtenances of a regular theatre, the opinion that the native drama is unfashionable receives an authoritative rebuke. The plays acted at Windsor Castle are the same that may be seen at the Haymarket and the Lyceum ; the actors in the Rubens Room are precisely the same individuals who appear on

the public boards; and it would be absurd to say that an entertainment which occupies a high rank at Windsor loses that rank when it comes to the metropolis.

"The very circumstance that theatricals are now generally talked about, is in itself likely to be of advantage to the English drama. A certain elevated class of the public, by shunning English theatres and skipping English critiques, might soon lose sight of the native drama altogether. But now, the plays and the actors are forced upon the attention of the higher orders from another point. He who studies the proceedings of the Court has an English theatrical programme thrust into his view; and the same course of reading which tells him that Her Majesty took an airing, also informs him that Mr. and Mrs. Kean play 'Hamlet' and 'Ophelia.' The crowded state of the principal theatres would seem to indicate that an awakened interest for theatricals is already taking effect.

"That many private controversies have arisen respecting the formation of the theatrical company at Windsor Castle, we are perfectly aware. Some have considered themselves unjustly excluded; others, although admitted, have thought themselves disadvantageously placed. These controversies, which are almost infinite in number, each involving its own distinct point, are not within our province. That every one of a class should be satisfied when a selection was to be made, was mathematically impossible. The right and wrong of each individual case is a matter of separate discussion, and much more concerns the parties themselves than the public before the lamps.

"In conclusion, if the Royal theatricals at Windsor give an impulse to the drama which proves advantageous

to its professors, we hope that the exertions of Mr. Charles Kean may not be entirely forgotten."

On the whole, however, the arrangement worked fairly well. Managers sometimes grumbled a bit when their casts were disturbed in order that some more potent favourite might obey the Royal command at Windsor; but, after all, it was a compliment to the artist and a good advertisement all round. On one occasion, well within my memory, a popular comic actor, who thought he had been shabbily treated in the matter of payment for his services, was ill-advised enough to present himself at the police court the next morning and to hand over to the sitting magistrate his "honorarium" for the purposes of the poor box.

It was only in the year 1858 that Charles Kean resented what he considered was an official snubbing, or rather a slight put upon his office of Master of the Revels, in which he so much prided himself. He was the most sensitive of men. When he quarrelled with any one, and he had at least one serious quarrel with Douglas Jerrold, who at one time wrote plays for him, he expected that all his friends would immediately quarrel with the enemies he had made. Serjeant Ballantine describes how Charles Kean got furious with a Club friend of his for conversing at the Garrick Club with Albert Smith, who had offended the actor.

"Charles Kean was a most worthy representative of the drama. He, it is well known, was the son of one of the greatest and most original actors that ever lived. He was highly educated, and his tastes and feelings were refined. He set an example of most careful and laborious study, and whether in a particular piece attained success or not, he never spared time or pains to

deserve it. There were some parts in which he was very successful. I think that his best efforts were in 'Louis the Eleventh,' a play translated from the French. If he were alive, however, I would not venture to say that he excelled in melodrama, and he certainly did not in Shakespeare. In the 'Corsican Brothers' he was admirable; and in a translation of Carré's 'Faust,' in which he played Mephistopheles, I never saw any better performance.

"Upon its first night he deviated from the strict propriety that ordinarily characterised everything he did by offering to bet two to one in bishops; but it being suggested that this would indicate a superfluity of such articles in his dominions, he excised it from his part. He was the most sensitive man I ever knew in my life. A great feud existed between him and Albert Smith. The original cause I forget, but he had offended Albert, who put into some penny paper that a patient audience had endured the infliction of Charles Kean in 'Hamlet' in the expectation of seeing the Keeleys in the after-piece. One night I and a member named Arabin, the son of Mr. Serjeant Arabin, were talking with Albert Smith in the coffee room. At the opposite side stood Charles Kean, scowling. Presently Albert departed. In about three strides Charles Kean reached us. 'Richard,' he said, in the most tragic of voices, 'I never thought that you, my old school-fellow, would have consorted with that viper.' Poor good-natured Dick had heard nothing of the quarrel. On another occasion it is related that he addressed an old orange-woman at his theatre, whom he had discovered applauding Ryder, who had been playing in the same piece with himself, in something of these terms, 'Ungrateful wretch, thou who hast eaten of my bread and enjoyed the hospita-

lity of my roof, how couldst thou applaud that man?' But after all, these were but foibles, and he was in all substantial respects a credit to his profession."

It was not likely that such a man, so enthusiastic in his art, such a scholar and student and so warmly espousing the cause of William Shakespeare and all his works, would look with particular favour on that other Shakespearean campaign directed with so much earnestness and vigour by Samuel Phelps in the north of London.

Unquestionably Sadler's Wells and the Princess's Theatre were rival and hostile camps, and there were plenty of men then, as there are now, to goad on the sensitive creature to positive irritability. They loved "to get a rise" out of Charles Kean, and he was easily drawn. Samuel Phelps chuckled to himself and went on his way calmly and contentedly, but the mention of Sadler's Wells to Charles Kean excited him almost to madness. He writhed like a skinned horse. The critics enjoyed the joke and continually fanned the fierce flame of jealousy and suspicion.

At last open warfare was shown. On January 25th, 1858, our popular Princess Royal of England was married to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, heir presumptive to the throne of Frederick the Great, and for a brief time Emperor of Germany. In order to give interest and dignity to the occasion, it was suggested by those in high authority at Court, that Mr. Mitchell, of Bond Street, connected for so many years and so honourably with the series of French plays at the St. James's Theatre, where they were alone permitted, owing to the "dog in the manger" policy of the associated London managers, and in fact with foreign artists and productions of every kind—should organise and arrange



a series of festival performances at Her Majesty's Opera House in the Haymarket. Court patronage was distinctly promised to Mr. Mitchell, all the crowned heads and wedding guests would be present, but it was to be distinctly understood that it was purely a commercial speculation on the part of the Bond Street Box Office. Mitchell could charge what prices he liked, and he stood to win a small fortune or lose it.

The first thing Mr. Mitchell did was to approach Charles Kean, who was naturally looked upon as the leading actor manager of London, and ask him as a matter of business if he would act "Macbeth" with his company at the first festival performance at the Italian Opera House in the Haymarket—chosen for its size and importance and also because the golden voiced Giuglini—one of the sweetest tenors I have ever heard—and Piccolomini were to appear in an opera. Mitchell found Charles Kean in anything but an amiable humour. He felt that he had been snubbed. Here was the Master of the Revels, the director of the Windsor Castle theatricals, put aside for a speculating Bond Street book and box seller! He asked if it had been intimated at Court that his services would be appreciated. In fact, was it or was it not a Royal command?

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Mitchell. "It is my commercial speculation. I make you an offer. It is for you to take it or leave it."

Charles Kean decided to leave it. He offered to open the Princess's Theatre free if the Queen and the Court would come. But that project fell through. He complained of the exorbitant charges with which he had really nothing to do, and of the disturbance of his programme for which he was to be paid.

The upshot of it all was that Phelps was chosen instead of Charles Kean to play Macbeth. And then, as

the saying goes, "the band began to play." The Phelpsites and Keanites had it out with a vengeance. The newspapers teemed with discussions "pro" and con." Charles Kean retired to his tent in a sulk, and determined to play "Hamlet" at his own theatre, and to get up a demonstration whilst "Macbeth" was being performed by Phelps at Her Majesty's.

The case was, as usual, admirably summed up by John Oxenford in *The Times* of the 20th of January, 1858.

"It is not usual, in recording public festivals, or other exhibitions, to note down what does *not* take place; but, nevertheless, an omission may be so exceedingly important as to render the blank it leaves quite as conspicuous as any object presented to the eye. The Roman procession immortalised by Tacitus, in which the busts that were *not* carried, outshone a host of sculptured Manlii and Quinctii, is familiar to the merest dabbler in classical literature; and those who have not smattered so far, may, if they please, illustrate the omission to which we here immediately allude, by imagining a Lord Mayor's Show with the Lord Mayor's carriage empty.

"Of course, we refer to the absence of Mr. Charles Kean's name from the list of the artists engaged last night as representatives of English tragedy. By his trionic genius, matured of late years to its highest degree of perfection, and by a splendid style of stage management that has made the production of each succeeding season eclipse its predecessor, Mr. Charles Kean has made the Princess's Theatre the acknowledged home of the Shakespearean drama. The days of the patents have passed away, but the privilege of holding an exclusive rank for the performance of the tragic drama has now belonged for several years to the Princess's

Theatre ; and to the exertions of Mr. Charles Kean, in this twofold capacity, is this high position to be solely attributed.

“ No one could, indeed, ignore the unquestionable merits of Mr. Phelps in raising the character of Sadler’s Wells, and implanting a veneration for Shakespeare in a public previously accustomed to lower forms of the drama. But, setting all other considerations aside, it is still impossible to regard the Pentonville district as the focus of the metropolitan drama, or to accept the presence of Mr. Phelps as a reason for the absence of Mr. Charles Kean. ‘ Why is the manager of the Princess’s Theatre and of the Windsor theatricals not here ? ’ is a question that must have forced itself last night upon every person who had not mixed in circles where theatrical politics form a staple of conversation.

“ Italian opera will be represented by Mr. Lumley’s company, with Signor Giuglini and Mademoiselle Piccolomini, both (for the first time) in ‘ La Sonnambula ’ ; English opera will be represented by the Pyne-Harrison company, engaged on the last new work by Mr. Balfe ; the comic drama will be represented by contingents from various theatres ; but tragedy is performed without the artist who, above all, is considered its chief representative. Here is, indeed, a case of the omitted Brutus—of the black cloth of Faliero.

“ A condition so remarkable needs some explanation, and we believe the facts are something like these, though we by no means warrant them proof against correction. Mr. Charles Kean was not passed over in the selection of actors to play at the ‘ festival performances,’ but, on the contrary, was, in the first instance, requested by Mr. Mitchell, who had the management

of the solemnities, to undertake the character of 'Macbeth.' The request, it should be distinctly understood, was made by Mr. Mitchell in his own capacity, as a speculator in the advantages to be derived from a theatre on the occasion of a royal visit; and, therefore, Mr. Charles Kean was not bound to regard it as a command or invitation from the Court.

"Exercising the right of choice which, under these circumstances, belonged to him, he refused to take any part in the 'festival performances.' Probably he considered that, after many years' good service as superintendent of the Windsor theatricals, the management of a theatrical entertainment associated with a royal marriage might have been confided to his well-tryed energies; probably, too, he thought that 'Macbeth' produced under other directions than his own might not impress the foreign visitors of this country with a correct notion as to the manner in which Shakespeare's plays were put upon the stage for the first-class audiences of this country.

"At all events, this much is certain, that he acted on the broad principle that one manager is not bound, by right or by courtesy, to work for the benefit of another manager; and this much, also, is certain, that his refusal to play is highly commended by many adepts in theatrical politics. In an article merely intended to record the events of an evening, it is not our intention to plunge into the depths of a controversy. We merely wish to explain, in as few terms as possible, the alleged reason of Mr. Kean's non-participation in the 'festival performances.'

"However, the attractions of the stage were but of secondary importance last night. The royal party did not arrive till deep in the second act of 'Macbeth,' just when Mr. Phelps had begun the famous dagger soliloquy.

Now the royal party was what the audience expressly came to see, and the eyes constantly directed towards the large empty box denoted an anxiety that did not in the least refer to the fate of Duncan. On the entrance of Her Majesty, everybody, of course, arose, and then the scrutiny of the brilliant assemblage occupied all who could get a sight of it. So, somehow or other, the tragedy reached its conclusion, not closely watched in its tardy course, and leaving a strong impression that spoken dramas do not greatly move operatic audiences. Music is evidently required to arouse the sympathies in Her Majesty's Theatre, for even the compositions ascribed to Lock, and so often scorned, proved welcome last night.

"How in the presence of that frigid public, must Mr. Phelps have longed for the hearty Shakespeareans of his own district! How, if the report of the frigidity reached the ears of Mr. Charles Kean, must he have rejoiced to think how well he was out of the affair! It is no joke to play tragedy before a blasé public, whose whole mind is absorbed by a royal box, and who dislike to find their meditations interrupted by a ruffle of applause. Mr. Phelps manfully sustained his energies to the end, and well earned the plaudits that, on the fall of the curtain, proceeded from the dramatically-disposed portion of the audience. Miss Helen Faucit, also, was called for at the close; and though she did not immediately make her appearance, she stood prominently amongst the singers during the performance of 'God Save the Queen.'

"The singing of this anthem was the real feature of the evening, and the spectacle presented when the whole audience rose, including the occupants of the royal box, was such as could not easily be found beyond the

precincts of our magnificent Opera House. For presenting a royal party to the public, and for demonstrating the feeling of that public to Royalty, there is no place like Her Majesty's Theatre. At the first note of the National Anthem all frigidity had vanished, and the acclamations of an audience that completely filled the house were heard on every side."

On the same night Charles Kean played Hamlet at the Princess's Theatre; his friends and partisans came in crowds, and, of course, made a demonstration, and, equally as a matter of course, Charles Kean made a flowery speech, and cordially thanked his kind friends in front.

It was certain that Douglas Jerrold would not let the matter alone. He and Charles Kean were at daggers drawn now, although they were once bosom friends. This is the eternal play of the dramatic profession. It is a plot so stereotyped that it becomes stale. There had been some dispute about a piece called "The Heart of Gold," for which the author received, as was customary in those days, £100 an act, for the sole acting right. What would the authors of to-day say to such a rate of remuneration? "The Silver King," which has made fortune after fortune for outside speculators, would not have brought in more than £500 for the author. Tom Taylor sold "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" for £150 down, and it has made fortunes for others.

This is how Douglas Jerrold, the playwright, the dramatic critic, and the editor of *Lloyd's Paper*, "went for" Charles Kean in his own paper or in *Punch*.

"Elevation of the Drama. In the *Morning Herald* there was a long criticism on 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream,' as usual written 'on the premises,' in which the

retained critic declares that Mr. Kean has 'elevated the national drama.' And so he has. He has hung it on a clothes peg!"

I wonder what Jerrold would have said to some of the national drama of to-day.

This is how he described Charles Kean's "Louis the Eleventh," on the 21st of January, 1855.

"'Louis the Eleventh' was played two years since at Drury Lane, when Mr. Davenport acted, with very considerable and very varied powers, the monster King. The same piece has been got up at the Princess's. We confess that we had not the courage to encounter the five dreary acts, having once endured them. The piece is a piece of one part. Louis, like a tapeworm, goes through it. Certain critics have, in Mr. C. Kean's own written words to the lamented Moran, 'come it very strong indeed.'

"One calls Mr. Kean 'sublime'! another quotes, in allusion to the worn-out state of the actor when summoned for reward, the words of Napier, 'The laurel is nobly won when the victor reels as he places it on his bleeding front.' Thus, we are to suppose how, on Saturday, Charles Kean reeled to his dressing-room under a load of greens. The picture is very touching. Another critic—a venerable hand—avouches that no actor could have acted like Charles Kean except David Garrick. And why not? Listen—'Edmund Kean would have been too invariably impassioned; Macready too sombre; John Kemble too stately; Cooke too coarse; and Young too humorous. To get an adequate representation we must travel back to David Garrick. He could have done it all.' But we have no need of David, seeing that we rejoice in Charles.



CHARLES KEAN.  
(Louis the Eleventh.)



WALTER LACY.





"Garwick died in 1779; but, on the authority of a living critic, David could have done it all. Is not this coming it a little too strong?' To name Edmund Kean, father, with Charles Kean, son, is to compare the intellectual might of Cain with the crowbar force of Jack Sheppard. Mr. Charles Kean has, we have never denied it, a certain amount of power for raw-head melodrama; but he is no more susceptible of the metaphysical subtleties of pure tragedy than was 'Peter the Wild Boy.'

"The *Daily News* speaks of the success of the piece as moderate; and of much of Mr. Kean's acting as mere rant. Other daily critics are, however, quite hysterical with rapture. Falstaff averred of Hal that the Prince had given him 'medicines to make him love him!' Have these critics unguardedly taken medicines, or what?

"The translation of Saturday—it is agreed upon all hands—was very handsomely got up. We have no doubt of the fact. When the manager is the sole portrait in the foreground, the daub is certain to have the biggest of golden frames."

And this was somewhat severe apropos of Miss Charlotte Cushman's Romeo, February 4th, 1855.

"Miss Romeo—or, rather, Miss Cushman as Romeo—has appeared this week at the Haymarket. The curiosity is not a novelty. We have before seen Miss Cushman as Miss Romeo; and though the lady lover is full of flame, it is the flame of phosphor—it shines, but it does not burn. We could as soon warm our hands at a painted fire, as feel the impetuous passion of an ungowned Romeo. The part of Juliet has been played by a young lady brand new from that nursery of the drama, Liverpool. However, Miss Swanborough we

must take another opportunity to see. Certainly, there never was greater room for a young and passionate actress. By the way, as a lady acts Verona's youth, why should not a gentleman play Verona's maiden? How would the subjoined for a novelty look in the Haymarket playbill?

<i>Romeo</i>	. . . . .	Miss Charlotte Cushman.
<i>Juliet</i>	. . . . .	Mr. Charles Kean.

"There would be attraction in this, at least for one night. Nor have we the least doubt that the representative of Juliet would have at hand certain sagacious critics, who would discover in his portraiture of the virgin of Verona graces and delicacies and profundities hitherto unknown or unacknowledged. 'Miss O'Neill's Juliet was too feeble, Miss Fanny Kemble's Juliet too forcible; whereas Mr. Charles Kean's Juliet united the spirituality of the angelic nature with all the ardour of purely human passion.' Mr. Paul Bedford has played Polly Peachum, why should not Mr. Charles Kean play Juliet? Any way, we make a present of the hint to the Haymarket manager."

Douglas Jerrold could not leave "Louis the Eleventh" alone. When Napoleon the Third and the Empress Eugénie came to London as the guests of the Queen he said:—

"At the Princess's there was a French opera without the music; and, we are of course told, the thing was better for the want of harmony. Wring a skylark's neck, stuff it, stick it in a fixed posture, and then put it in a fine framed and glazed case,—it is a much better skylark than when singing at 'heaven's gate.' The Princess workman has translated *his* bird from life to

death, and put it—it is allowed on all hands—in a very fine case. The translation is by the stock translator; the manager, like Hissgoose, the tailor, working up his stuff on the premises. . . .

"In a few hours after this sheet shall be published, the Emperor and Empress of the French will have arrived in England as the guests of Queen Victoria. They are, it seems, to go in state to the Opera; they, too, visit the hippopotami at the Park—(*they* are at least not 'taken from the French;')—but we do not see what can be offered to their Majesties at any of the theatres that they may not have witnessed in the Paris original. Certainly, Astley's as the theatre for real English sports is an exception; and they might make a day calling at the Bank, the Mint, and the Tower on 'their way to visit Shakespeare at the Standard, where, no doubt, Louis Napoleon would decorate Miss Glyn with the star of the Legion of Honour. All this is, however, a matter of conjecture. One point alone is certain: the physicians of the Empress have, under all circumstances, emphatically forbidden her visit to the Princess's to see Mr. Charles Kean's horrible death faces in 'Louis the Eleventh.' If their Majesties resolve to patronise the great actor 'from the French,' it is understood that Mr. Kean will receive a considerate command from Windsor to die in his own dressing-room."

In his correspondence Jerrold was not a bit more amiable.

"August 30th, 1853.

"DEAR SIR,—I do not return to London until the end of September. I will then, should I find my drama available elsewhere; of which I have little doubt, repurchase it of you. Of course, you cannot forget that you applied to *me* to write the piece. I never sought *you* ;

the parts were written for Mrs. Kean and yourself, and accepted with much laudation. After three seasons you propose a most damaging alteration of cast, and break your compact. Be it so.

“And now, dear Sir, as to ‘the hostile and malicious feeling’ you attribute to me as regards your ‘person and management,’ I can believe that your habits may not enable you to perceive the ill manners and the injustice of such an unsupported imputation. Neither hostility nor malice exist in me towards you or your doings. You would probably think it very rude in me were I, because you have broken faith with me, to stigmatise you as a person vain, capricious, unstable in his agreements, with a festering anxiety to consider every man his mortal enemy who is not prepared to acknowledge him the eighth wonder of the habitable world.

“I feel almost certain that you would think this very rude in me. Therefore, be more chary of your imputations of malice and hostility towards,

“Yours faithfully,

“DOUGLAS JERROLD.

“TO CHARLES KEAN, ESQ.”

But the severest attack came on the 10th of November, 1853, when Samuel Phelps was invited to play “Henry the Fifth” at Windsor Castle. This was printed in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, edited by Douglas Jerrold.

“*The Great Kean Monopoly.*”

“The Kean monopoly has been broken through. Mr. Phelps performed ‘Henry the Fifth’ at Windsor Castle on Thursday last. He has been the first to find a north-west passage to the Palace. The passage once found, others may quickly follow. The difficulties of the passage no one can conceive but those who have

had to steer through the immense blocks of ice which Mr. Charles Kean has thrown in the way of his brother managers. . . . He has used this privilege for the glorification of himself as an actor and a manager, until the Queen and the Court have been brought to believe that there was but one English actor, and but one English theatre; that actor being Mr. Charles Kean, and that theatre being the Princess's! . . . . We hope a dramatic commission will be issued from Windsor Castle (and how proud we shall be if we are nominated to sit upon it!) to inquire into the following questions:—

"How far the patronage bestowed upon Mr. Charles Kean has benefited the drama?"

"How often he has allowed other managers to perform, and the number of times those managers have performed in comparison with Charles Kean?"

"To inquire how often Mr. Phelps has performed at Windsor Castle before Thursday evening, November 10, 1853?"

"To discover the names of the other tragedians who have played at Windsor Castle, by the kind permission and favour of Mr. Charles Kean?"

"To ascertain, if possible, the number of original pieces Mr. Charles Kean has produced since he has been in possession of the patronage of the Court?"

"On the other side, to ascertain the number of revivals, adaptations, and more particularly translations, which Mr. Charles Kean has produced during the same period?"

"To find out the sum of money, if possible, which Mr. Charles Kean has paid to living authors for the encouragement of the drama, since he has been manager of the Princess's?"

“On the other side, to find out the sums of money which Mr. Charles Kean has paid to translators for the discouragement of the *ditto*, during the same period?

“To investigate the principles, if any, of Mr. Charles Kean’s management? . . . . And, lastly, to state the extent of injury which the English stage would suffer, and whether it would be more weak and ailing than it already is, if Mr. Charles Kean were to lose to-morrow the lucrative situation which he at present holds at Court of ‘wet nurse to the British drama’?

“If the above commission is issued, we should like of all things to be present during Mr. Charles Kean’s examination. In the meantime, Mr. Phelps has broken up the great Kean monopoly; and, the monopoly now broken, we hope that henceforth dramatic free trade will reign at the Palace in its stead. The actor’s loaf and the author’s crust (for where the former gets a loaf the latter only gets a crust) both depend upon it.”

Both Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, as was the custom in those days, took themselves very seriously. “Ellen,” as her husband used to call his clever wife, with a slightly nasal accent, the original Ellen Tree, was, of course, an admirable and experienced actress; but she never wholly divested herself of the air of a tragedy queen. Mrs. Charles Kean, like Mrs. Alfred Wigan, was incessantly acting on and off the stage; Mrs. Kean priding herself on her histrionic career; Mrs. Wigan on her aristocratic relations and her Court friendships, on which she was accustomed to dilate when she honoured the green-room with her presence, to the disgust of good old Mrs. Winstanley, an excellent actress, and the original editress of *Bow Bells*, who had a witty tongue, and made very short work of the aristocratic

affectations of Mrs. A. Wigan. Society of that day had not greatly patronised the actor and actress, and certainly the Keans and the Wigans made the very most of their social opportunity.

And yet, if good stories are to be believed, Macready was also of the "aloof" order. I have been told that, putting on an air of dignity, he always pretended he could not recollect Charles Kean's name, and invariably alluded to him, cultured gentleman and Eton scholar as he was, as "that young man with the clever father."

But this is a good example of Mrs. Charles Kean's serious and tragic air. Charles Kean, I have always understood, was in early days a charming and amusing companion, full of good stories and green-room gossip, a chip of the old block, who used to frequent the Wrekin and the Harp, under the shadow of Drury Lane—a veritable Bohemian as his father was almost to the last. But "Ellen" changed all that, and a certain dignity had to be assumed with the office of the "Master of the Revels," to say nothing of Court and Society patronage.

Charles Kean was playing Hamlet in the provinces on one occasion, and was of course very punctilious about the detail of the stage, which was his mania. A rising young actor who was cast for Horatio discovered to his horror that his tights had not arrived as expected. He knew that Charles Kean's eagle eye would be upon him, as all the scenes of Horatio are with Hamlet. In his distress, he was obliged to have recourse to a pair of old patched and darned *scarlet* worsted tights, a sorry contrast to the "trappings and suits of woe" of his friend the Prince of Denmark. Frightened out of his life, he repaired in fear and trembling to see Charles Kean and explain matters. He knocked nervously at



the door, and to his horror Mrs. Charles Kean answered it. With tragic air, finger to lip, and walking on tiptoe, fearful of disturbing her nervous and sensitive partner,

“What do you want, Sir?”

“To see Mr. Charles Kean.”

Whereupon Mrs. Kean made a stately and mysterious exit. She returned, still imploring silence by dramatic gesture.

“What might your business be?” she solemnly asked.

Horatio explained as well as he could the dilemma of the scarlet tights.

“Could Mr. Charles Kean possibly forgive him?”

Again a tragic exit on the part of Mrs. Kean. Once more she reappeared with a serene and seraphic countenance.

“Mr. Kean will pardon you. But” (pointing ecstatically to Heaven) “will you be forgiven *there*?”

It was in 1850 that Charles Kean, with his popular partner Bob Keeley, took over the management of the Princess's Theatre under a two years' lease. Both names were dear to the public; Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, apart from anything else, were a certain “draw”; Mrs. Charles Kean, who had vast experience, was known to be a first-class stage directress; both managers had capital; both families were highly esteemed in Society and at Court; Her Majesty the Queen, to show her interest in the venture, took a box for the season, and the company was carefully selected.

In addition to the actor managers, there were Harley, one of the best low comedians of his time; Bartley, an excellent actor; Alfred Wigan, then supposed to be, in the snobbish cant of the day, “one of the only gentlemen on the stage”; Drinkwater Meadows, a splendid old

man ; John Ryder, the stalwart outspoken actor, rough, but sound in his art, who had graduated under "old Mac," as Macready was called ; David Fisher, a capital comedian, who "played the fiddle like an angel" ; J. F. Cathcart, Kean's right-hand man, alive to-day to rebut or confirm what I have written ; old Addison, the father of Fanny and Carlotta, who both did their parental relation more than credit ; Flexmore, one of the best clowns and dancing masters since the days of Grimaldi ; whilst, in addition to Mrs. Charles Kean and Mrs. Keeley, there were on the staff Mrs. Winstanley, a witty woman and admirable actress, who possessed literary as well as stage talent ; Mrs. Alfred Wigan, an artist of pronounced skill ; Carlotta Leclercq, then the loveliest of girls, and the sweetest Perdita in the "Winter's Tale" ever seen ; Agnes Robertson—a ward of the Keans—who eventually married Dion Boucicault ; Miss Murray, who in after years was wedded to Samuel Brandram, the elocutionist and reciter ; and Mary Keeley, who became the wife of the genial entertainer and novelist, Albert Smith.

It may be interesting to note what was done in this first season of the Kean and Keeley management, whose success was crowned by the first of all the National Exhibitions, the Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, that gathered to London representatives of all nations in the world. The triumph indeed of the Princess's venture was so pronounced, that Keeley was able to retire from management, leaving Charles Kean in sole charge.

Here at any rate is an idea of the excellent work they did together.

During the first season, the Shakespearean plays represented were as follows :—"Hamlet," fourteen

times ; "Twelfth Night," forty ; "As You Like It," four ; "The Merchant of Venice," twelve ; and "Henry the Fourth," Part I., twenty-two ; "The Wife's Secret" commanded twenty-six repetitions ; "The Gamester," fourteen ; "The Prisoner of War," thirteen ; "The Stranger," seven ; and "Town and Country," four. The principal novelties were "The Templar," and "The Duke's Wager," by Mr. Slous ; "Love in a Maze," by Mr. Boucicault ; and a romantic drama in the melodramatic line, of a very peculiar character, skilfully adapted from the French, by Mr. John Oxenford, entitled "Pauline."

In the latter, the powerful acting of Mr. and Mrs. C. Kean, in two well-contrasted original parts, elicited universal approbation. There were also six light farces, namely, "Platonic Attachments," "A Model of a Wife," "Sent to the Tower," "Betsy Baker," "To Parents and Guardians," and "Apartments to Let" ; with the pantomime of "Alonzo the Brave," by Mr. Fitzball ; and the burlesque spectacle of "The Alhambra," by Mr. Albert Smith, produced at Easter and continued without interruption to the close of the season. The total number of pieces acted amounted to twenty-seven, of which twelve were entirely new.

I was only ten years old when I was taken as an extraordinary treat to the Great Exhibition of 1851, but I have a distinct recollection of many features of it. Indeed, as age advances I find that my mind is far clearer regarding the events of yesterday than those of to-day. I see before me Sir Joseph Paxton's blue glass house with its waving flags and pennants, situated on a strip of the Park close to Rotten Row and the Knightsbridge Barracks. That dominant colour, blue, has never faded from my memory. All the outside painting was bright blue, the glass seemed blue, the sky was blue and

sunny, for was not the famous Exhibition, the pet idea of the Prince Consort, opened on the 1st of May?

What then do I remember about the Exhibition of 1851, some of whose glass and girders still stand on Sydenham Hill in the case of the Crystal Palace? I remember the famous tree in the Park, a fine elm tree that was saved from destruction by command of the Queen, and was literally built over; for there stood the tree, hale, leafy and green, in perhaps the most attractive bazaar that the world has ever seen. Subsequent Exhibitions in London, Paris, and other countries have no doubt contained more magnificent things, because science and art increase and multiply with age and time; but I do not believe that anything more beautiful, picturesque, or dazzling has ever been seen than that mighty Palace of Glass of 1851.

Of course I remember the great Koh-i-Nor Diamond lent by the Queen, and perfectly safe under the watchful eye of a couple of policemen; and the Indian products, and the huge trophies erected in the nave; and the dais on which Her Majesty, the Prince Consort and the little Prince of Wales had stood on that glorious May morning with its typical "Queen's weather"; and the stuffed animals from Würtemberg, and, naturally enough, the great organ built by Henry Willis, who has constructed some of the grandest instruments ever since; for was he not, and had he not been, my father's organist at Christ Church, Hoxton, and had he not taught me to sing in many a church anthem in our surpliced choir?

The mention at the Princess's of John Oxenford's play taken from the French, "Pauline, the Night of Terror," a very powerful but gruesome work, in which both Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean were very fine, reminds me that here we find, I think for the first time, the now well-worn

situation of the duel across the table, with pistols, loaded and unloaded, taken from under the table cloth, a situation suggested both in Tom Taylor's "Still Waters Run Deep," and in Anthony Hope's brilliant "Adventures of Lady Ursula."

Here is the situation in "Pauline," and I remember the effect was so marvellous that no one knew if Charles Kean were dead or not before the curtain fell.

Lucien : Gentlemen, from motives which it is unnecessary to explain to you, but which are insuperable, a duel between Monsieur de Beuzeval and me cannot be avoided ; but we have resolved to fight in such a manner that one of us must die.

Mont. : What do you say ?

Lucien : You have promised me not to make any observations ; look then, in silence, on that which is about to take place, and you will render evidence of what you see. (Horace deliberately chooses a pistol from under the cloth.)

Lucien (takes the other) : Count three, Beauchamp ; at the number three, we will fire together. Is that right, count ?

Horace : Quite so !

Beau. : One—two—three ! (They fire.)

Horace (remains erect for a few moments, changing only in countenance ; he then sinks forward on the table, but recovers himself, rises, and speaks) : Ah, I believe you have the best of it, Monsieur Lucien. Thank you, you have saved me from the scaffold ! (He falls.) (Enter Pauline, followed by the rest of the characters.)

Pauline : Dead !—ah, dead !

Lucien : Pauline !

Pauline (falls back in his arms) : I forgave him, Lucien ; could not you ? I will forget—in Heaven—that it was your hand—that—killed—oh ! (She dies.)

Here is the situation in "Still Waters Run Deep." It is an important scene in Tom Taylor's play produced at the Olympic in 1855, with Sam Emery, George Vining, Alfred Wigan, Mrs. Melfort, and afterwards Mrs. Alfred Wigan in the cast. The play was founded on a novel by Charles de Bernard, called *Le Gendre*. The scene occurs in the third act :—

Mildmay : Gentlemen, I hold you all to witness what passed. I am

the insulted. I have the choice of time, place, and weapons. I make that choice. Here—now—these pistols.

Hawksley : I'm ready ; load away, gentlemen. (Dunbilk\* begins to load pistol.)

Mildmay : You have often boasted you can hit the pip of an ace at twenty paces. I never fired a pistol at anything more formidable than a sparrow. I am willing to risk my life against yours on equal terms ; but if we stand up opposite to each other at twelve paces, each with a loaded pistol—skill against no skill—what becomes of the equality of risk ? Your friend has loaded one of these pistols ; let us leave the other unloaded ; put both under the cloth ; each draw one, and fire together across the table. Now close your eyes and choose—you hesitate ?

Hawksley : Such a way of fighting was never heard but in a novel. I decline this unheard-of mode of proceeding.

Mildmay : I expected as much. I only wished to show these gentlemen that, under cover of the forms of a duel, you contemplated assassination. (Goes to door and unlocks it.) The storm is passed, ladies.

Anthony Hope's great scene in "*Lady Ursula*" is virtually the same.

I cannot dismiss the year 1851 without placing on record the fact that William Charles Macready, who had done so much for his art, and to which he gave so much dignity, passion, and expression, retired from the stage in that year for ever. He did not desire to "lag a veteran." He determined to go, and he went, living afterwards in honourable retirement at Cheltenham for many years. It must ever be my regret that I never saw Macready act. I was taken to the theatre in 1848, so I might easily have done so. But Fate willed it otherwise. From my history of recollections for fifty years two great names fall out, Macready and Clara Morris, and I think that is about all. Would that I had seen the art of both ; for in writing of great actors and actresses, comparisons, to my mind, are never odious.

The following is the speech Macready made on this memorable occasion.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—My last theatrical part

is played, and, in accordance with long-established usage, I appear once more before you.

“Even if I were without precedent for the discharge of this act of duty, it is one which my own feelings would irresistibly urge upon me; for as I look back upon my long professional career, I see in it but one continuous record of indulgence and support extended to me, cheering me in my onward progress, and upholding me in mortifying emergencies.

“I have therefore been desirous of offering you, in my own character, my parting acknowledgments for the impartial kindness with which my humble efforts have uniformly been received, and for a life made happier by your favours.

“The distance of more than five and thirty years has not dimmed my recollection of the encouragement which gave fresh impulse to the inexperienced essays of my youth, and stimulated me to perseverance, when struggling hardly for equality of position against the genius and talent of those artists whose superior excellence I ungrudgingly admitted, admired, and honoured.

“That encouragement helped to place me, in respect of privileges and emolument, on a footing with my distinguished competitors.

“With the growth of time your favour seemed to grow, and, undisturbed in my hold on your opinion, from year to year I found friends more thickly clustering round me.

“All I can advance to testify how justly I have appreciated the patronage thus liberally awarded me, is the devotion, throughout those years, of my best energies to your service.

“My ambition to establish a theatre, in regard to decorum and taste, worthy of our country, and to have

in it the plays of our divine Shakespeare fitly illustrated, was frustrated by those whose duty it was, in virtue of the trust committed to them, themselves to have undertaken the task. But some good seed has yet been sown; and in the zeal and creditable productions of certain of our present managers, we have assurance that the corrupt editions and unworthy presentations of past days will never be restored, but that the purity of our great poet's text will, from henceforward, be held on our English stage in the reverence it ever shall command.

"I have little more to say.

"By some, the relation of an actor to his audience is considered as slight and transient. I do not feel it so.

"The repeated manifestation, under circumstances personally affecting me, of your favourable sentiments towards me, will live with life among my most grateful memories; and because I would not willingly abate one jot in your esteem, I retire with the belief of yet unfailing powers, rather than linger on the scene to set in contrast the feeble style of age with the more vigorous exertions of my better years.

"Words—at least, such as I can command—are ineffectual to convey my thanks; you will believe that I feel far more than I give utterance to.

"With sentiments of the deepest gratitude I take my leave, bidding you, ladies and gentlemen, in my past professional capacity, with regret, a last farewell."

The farewell scene has been affectionately described by Lady Pollock, Macready's devoted friend.

"In an eminent degree, Macready possessed those attributes which rouse the best faculties and stir the deepest sympathies of humanity.



“Therefore it was that the great audience, which was gathered together to listen to his last farewell at Drury Lane (February 26th, 1851), were moved to an unusual degree. They were parting with the guide to all that was most elevated in poetry; with the teacher of pure and high sentiment; with the passionate exponent of Shakespeare; with ‘the opener of mysterious doors leading to universal knowledge’; with a friend who was a friend indeed. When he came on the stage after his performance of *Macbeth*, in his daily dress and alone, they bent eagerly forward. Their agitation was evident; but it was dominated by the desire to hear every syllable he uttered. He spoke, as suited the occasion, simply and briefly; his accents were tender, yet quite distinct. At the end his voice faltered, and tears, which he quietly wiped away, fell from his eyes. The tears of his hearers flowed fast; and a voice from the gallery called out in lamentation, ‘The last of the Mohicans!’ Then arose a cheer loud and long, pausing for an instant, only to be renewed again and again with increasing power. Of the large numbers who failed to gain admittance, many were gathered outside the walls, and echoed the applause from within.

“John Toole, the famous comedian, loves to tell how, early that day, he had to bestir himself to get a place, and how he stood, one of a long queue, outside of the pit entrance from two to six o’clock. Macready withdrew from the world in the height of his fame. He had many offers to return which were tempting, if money could have tempted him; and one solicitation more difficult to refuse, the solicitation of friendship. Charles Dickens, with all his eloquence, urged him to give Shakespearean readings in London; but he replied,

in the words of his Werner, 'I have done ! I have done ! I have done with life !' "

I was lucky enough to obtain, some years ago, a letter written by Charles Dickens to Macready, asking him to come to Paris to meet Scribe and Ary Scheffer, and I have found two Haymarket playbills of some interest in connection with Macready's Farewell of the Stage. I do not hesitate to preserve them all here.

" 49 CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS,  
" March 22nd, 1856.

" MY DEAR MACREADY,—I want you—you being quite well again, as I trust you are, and resolute to come to Paris—so to arrange your order of march as to let me know beforehand when you will come, and how long you will stay. "We owe Scribe and his wife a dinner, and I should like to pay the debt when you are with us. Ary Scheffer too would be delighted to see you again. If I could arrange for a certain day, I would secure them. We cannot afford (you and I, I mean) to keep much company, because we shall want to look in at a theatre or so, I dare say !

"It would suit my work best if I could keep myself clear until Monday, the 7th of April. But in case that day should be too late for the beginning of your brief visit, with a reference to any other engagements you have in contemplation, then fix an earlier one, and I will make 'little Dorrit curtsy to it.' My recent visit to London and my having only just now come back, have thrown me a little behindhand ; but I hope to come up with a wet sail in a few days.

"You should have seen the ruins of Covent Garden Theatre. I went in, the moment I got to London—four days after the fire, although the audience part, and the

stage, were so tremendously burnt out that there was not a piece of wood half the size of a lucifer match for the eye to rest on—though nothing whatever remained but bricks and smelted iron, lying on a great black desert—the theatre still looked so wonderfully like its old self grown gigantic, that I never saw so strange a sight. The wall dividing the front from the stage still remained, and the iron pass-doors stood ajar, in an impossible and inaccessible frame. The arches that supported the stage were there, and the arches that supported the pit; and on the centre of the latter, lay something like a Titanic grape-vine that a hurricane had pulled up by the roots, twisted, and flung down there. This was the great chandelier. Gye had kept the men's wardrobe at the top of the house, over the great entrance staircase. When the roof fell in, it came down bodily, and all that part of the ruin was like an old Babylonian pavement—bright rags tessellating the background—sometimes in pieces so large that I could make out the dresses in the 'Trovatore.'

"I should run on for a couple of hours if I were to describe the spectacle as I saw it. Therefore I will immediately muzzle myself.

"All here unite in kindest loves to dear Miss Macready, to Katie, Lillie, Benvenutas, my godson, and the noble Johnny. We are charmed to hear such happy accounts of Willie and Ned, and send our loving remembrances to them in the next letters.

"All Parisian novelties you shall see and hear for yourself.

"Ever, my dear Macready,

"Your affectionate friend,

"CHARLES DICKENS.

"Mr. F.'s Aunt sends her defiant respects!"

## THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

MR. BEN. WEBSTER . . . . . Sole Lessee and Manager.

POSITIVELY THE LAST WEEK BUT TWO AND FINAL NIGHTS

OF

MR. MACREADY EVER PERFORMING ON ANY STAGE,

His Last Night being Monday, Feb. 3rd.

18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st Nights of the Popular Arabian Nights'  
Burlesque of

## THE SECOND CALENDER.

The Free List is entirely suspended (the Public Press excepted).  
The Second Price will be Admitted at the conclusion of the Third Act of  
the Play.

This Evening, Wednesday, Jan. 15th, 1851,

Will be performed (Last Time) Shakespeare's Play of

## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

<i>Duke of Venice</i> . . . . .	Mr. Woolgar.
<i>Antonio</i> (the Merchant of Venice) . . . . .	Mr. Rogers.
<i>Bassanio</i> (his Friend) . . . . .	Mr. Davenport.
<i>Salano</i> . . . . .	{ Mr. Parselle.
<i>Salarino</i> . . . . .	
(Friends to Antonio and Bassanio) . . . . .	
<i>Gratiano</i> . . . . .	Mr. Braid.
<i>Lorenzo</i> (in love with <i>Jessica</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. Howe.
<i>Shylock</i> (a Jew) . . . . .	Mr. Caulfield.
(Positively the Last Time he will ever perform that Character.)	
<i>Tubal</i> (a Jew, his Friend) . . . . .	Mr. Macready.
<i>Launcelot Gobbo</i> (a Clown, Servant to <i>Shylock</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. James Bland.
<i>Old Gobbo</i> (Father to <i>Launcelot</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. Buckstone.
<i>Balthazar</i> and <i>Stephano</i> (Servants to <i>Portia</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. Lambert.
	Mr. Clark and Mr.
	A. Brindal.
<i>Leonardo</i> (Servant to <i>Bassanio</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. Ellis.
<i>Portia</i> (a rich Heiress) . . . . .	Mrs. Warner.
<i>Nerissa</i> (her Waiting Maid) . . . . .	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
<i>Jessica</i> (Daughter to <i>Shylock</i> ) . . . . .	Miss P. Horton.

To which will be added (18th Time) by the Authors of "The Last Edition  
of Ivanhoe," "The Sphinx," &c., an entirely new translation, taken  
an immense way from the original Arabic, of the story of

## THE SECOND CALENDER ;

AND THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY WHO HAD THE FIGHT WITH THE GENIE.

*Characters in the Introduction.*

<i>Epitimarus the Great</i> { King of the Ebony Isles—a country not half so black as it is painted }	Mr. James Bland.
<i>Al Kutitphat</i> { An Officer attached to the Court, probably Prime Minister, or Butler, or something }	Mr. A. Brindal.
<i>Jarjarhees</i> . { "The Son of the Daughter of Eblis," a Genie or Phantasm Captain }	Mr. Charles Selby.
<i>The Princess Gulnare</i> . . . . .	Mrs. L. S. Buckingham.

*Characters in the Drama.*

*Prince Agib* { The "Second Calender" of history, who, having no name in the original legend, has taken the nearest he could lay his hand on; a Prince of a Fellow, afterwards an Ape of the Dead Sea, by } Miss Annie Romer and Mr. Lebarr.

\* \* The above has been found such a remarkably strong part as to require two people to play it.

*Codja* { A more than ordinarily virtuous Woodcutter, distantly related, it is thought, to the Codjas of Codja's Hall. A Solemnly Constituted Impostor, subsequently a Melodious Windbag } Mr. Buckstone.

*The Princess Gulnare* { (Whom the audience will be delighted to see again) } Mrs. L. S. Buckingham.

*Jarjarhees* . . . . . (Whom they won't) . . . . . Mr. Charles Selby.

*Zubeydeh* { His Maid of All-Work, and hitherto no Play, this being the first she has appeared in } Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

*Cranbourn Ali* { Rajah of Mulligatawny (an Indian Compound, "made of pepper and that sort of thing") . . . . . } Mr. James Bland.

Whose inexhaustible dignity renders him fully equal to any two monarchs.

NOTE.—As the joke of Mr. Bland, in this character, representing at the same time an *Injin* and a *Buffer*, is sure to be made by somebody, the Authors think they may as well make it at once and get it over.

*Dost Ymillah* . . . (A Purblind and Opaque Flunkey) . . . Mr. Caulfield.

*Falderal Lal Singh* . . . Mr. Clark. *Ameer Sikh* . . . Mr. Coe.

*The Princess Zairé* { The *Rajah's* talented and spirited Daughter—in every sense of the word a charming woman: projectress of the Grand Mulligatawny Industrial Exhibition, and Pretty-fellow of the Royal College of Fairies } Miss P. Horton.

*The Queen of Beauty*

*Sweetlips and Tiffin* . . . (Her Fairy Secretaries) . . . Miss Woulds and Miss A. Woulds.

*The Smallest Part in the Piece* . . . . . Miss Caulfield.

The Picnic in the Desert.

Frightful accident, nearly resulting in loss of life.—A blind bargain (of one eye).

Scene 1.—An Impenetrable Forest.

Grand Scena by Mr. Buckstone (accompanied by Extraordinary Movements by Miss A. Romer).

2.—The Genie's Subterranean Palace.

"The Vicissitudes of a Servant Girl," by an "acknowledged heroine of Domestic Drama."—The Captive Princess.—Friends calling and dropping in.—The Talisman!—Terrific Smash and Alarming Sacrifice!—The Ape of the Dead Sea.—The Doom of the Princess of the Ebony Isles!

A very Desert Island.

Act II., Scene 1.—Public Place in Curripoudah (the Capital Portion of Mulligatawny).

A city in a temporary state of Indian Pickle.—Arrivals for the Grand Mulligatawny Exhibition of all Nations.—Rapid Progress of the Resident Directress!—Terrific Balloon Ascent.—The Musical Contributions of all Nations to the Exhibition, by Miss P. Horton.

2.—The Queen of Beauty's Sanctum Sanctorum and Select Committee Room of the Exhibition.

3.—Privy Council Chamber of the Rajah of Mulligatawny.

The Queen of Beauty's Crystal Palace.

"The Second Calender" (6d.) is published in Webster's *National Acting Drama*, and may be had in the Theatre.

### THE FINAL NIGHTS OF EACH OF MR. MACREADY'S MOST POPULAR CHARACTERS:

THIS EVENING, in "SHYLOCK" (being the Last Time he will ever perform that Character).

TO-MORROW, in "VIRGINIUS" (being the Last Time he will ever perform that Character).

On FRIDAY, in "KING JOHN" (being the Last Time he will ever perform that Character).

On MONDAY, *Cassius* in "JULIUS CÆSAR" (being the Last Time he will ever perform that Character).

On TUESDAY, *Pierre*, in "VENICE PRESERVED" (being the Last Time he will ever perform that Character).

And TERMINATE positively MONDAY, Feb. 3, when he will perform "KING LEAR" for the Last Time for Ever on any Stage.

To guard against misunderstanding, or disappointment, it is deemed requisite to state, that these performances will not be extended, and that the public announcement of Mr. Macready's last performance of each of his characters will be most faithfully adhered to.

To-morrow (FINAL PERFORMANCE), the Tragedy of "VIRGINIUS" *Appius Claudius*, Mr. Howe; *Cains Claudius*, Mr. Parselle; *Marcus*, Mr. Woolgar; *Dentatus*, Mr. Stuart; *Virginus*, Mr. Macready (positively the last time he will ever perform that character); *Numitorius*, Mr. Rogers; *Scilius*, Mr. Davenport; *Lucius*, Miss P. Horton; *Titus*, Mr. Charles Selby; *Servius*, Mr. James Bland; *Virginia*, Miss Reynolds; *Servia*, Mrs. Warner. With THE SECOND CALENDER; AND THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY WHO HAD THE FIGHT WITH THE GENIE: *Prince Agib*, Miss Annie Romer; *The Ape of the Dead Sea*, Mr. Lebar; *Codja*, Mr. Buckstone; *The Princess Gulnare*. Mrs. L. S. Buckingham; *Jarjarhees*, Mr. Charles Selby; *Zubeydeh*, Mrs. Fitzwilliam; *Cranbourn Ali*, Mr. James Bland; *The Queen of Beauty*, Miss P. Horton.

All applications respecting the Bills to be addressed (post paid) to Mr. T. Ireland, Craven Buildings, Drury Lane.

### THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

MR. BEN. WEBSTER . . . . . Sole Lessee and Manager.

### POSITIVELY THE LAST NIGHT

OF THE EMINENT TRAGEDIAN

### MR. MACREADY'S FINAL PERFORMANCES ON ANY STAGE.

34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, and 38th Nights of the Popular Arabian Nights' Burlesque of

### THE SECOND CALENDER.

The Free List is entirely suspended (the Public Press excepted).  
The Second Price will be Admitted at the conclusion of the Third Act of the Tragedy.

This Evening, Monday, Feb. 3rd, 1851,

Will be presented (Last Time for Ever), Shakspeare's Tragedy of

### KING LEAR.

<i>King Lear</i> . . . . .	Mr. Macready.	
<i>(Positively the Last Time he will ever perform that Character.)</i>		
<i>Duke of Burgundy</i> . Mr. A. Brindal.	<i>Fool</i> . . . . .	Miss P. Horton.
<i>Duke of Cornwall</i> . Mr. Braid.	<i>Oswald</i> (a Steward). Mr. Charles Selby.	
<i>Duke of Albany</i> . . Mr. Parselle.	<i>Lochrine</i> . . . . .	Mr. Caulfield.
<i>Earl of Glo'ster</i> . . Mr. Rogers.	<i>King of France</i> . .	Mr. Woolgar.
<i>Earl of Kent</i> . . . Mr. Stuart.	<i>Herald</i> . . . . .	Mr. Ellis.
<i>Edgar</i> . . . . . Mr. Davenport.	<i>Old Man</i> . . . . .	Mr. Santer.
<i>Edmund</i> . . . . . Mr. Howe.	<i>First Knight</i> . . .	Mr. Coe.
<i>Curan</i> (a Courtier). Mr. Clark.	<i>Officer</i> . . . . .	Mr. Field.
<i>Physician</i> . . . . . Mr. James Bland.		
<i>Goneril</i> . . . . .		Mrs. Warner.
<i>Regan</i> . . . . .		Mrs. L. S. Buckingham.
<i>Cordelia</i> . . . . .		Miss Reynolds.

To which will be added (34th Time) by the authors of "The Last Edition of Ivanhoe," "The Sphinx," &c., an entirely new translation, taken an immense way from the original Arabic, of the story of

### THE SECOND CALENDER ;

AND THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY WHO HAD THE FIGHT WITH THE GENIE.

#### *Characters in the Introduction.*

<i>Epitimarus the Great</i> { King of the Ebony Isles—a country not half so black as it is painted }	Mr. James Bland.
<i>Al Kutitphat</i> { An Officer attached to the Court, probably Prime Minister, or Butler, or something }	Mr. A. Brindal.
<i>Jarjarhees</i> { "The Son of the Daughter of Eblis," a Genie or Phantasm Captain }	Mr. Charles Selby.
<i>The Princess Gulnare</i> . . . . .	Mrs. L. S. Buckingham.
<i>A Cabman</i> . . . . . (From the lowest Ranks) . . .	Master Caulfield.

#### *Characters in the Drama.*

<i>Prince Agib</i> { The "Second Calender" of history, who having no name in the original legend has taken the nearest he could lay his hands on ; a Prince of a Fellow, after- wards an Ape of the Dead Sea, by }	Miss Annie Romer and Mr. Lebarr.
<i>Codja</i> { A more than ordinarily virtuous Woodcutter, distantly related, it is thought, to the Codjas of Codja's Hall. A Solemnly-Constituted Im- postor, subsequently a Melodious Windbag }	Mr. Buckstone.
<i>The Princess Gulnare</i> { (Whom the audience will be de- lighted to see again) }	Mrs. L. S. Bucking- ham.
<i>Jarjarhees</i> . . . . . (Whom they won't) . . .	Mr. Charles Selby.
<i>Zubeydeh</i> { His Maid of All-Work and hitherto no Play, this being the first she has appeared in }	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
<i>Cranbourn Ali</i> { Rajah of Mulligatawnney (an Indian Compound, "made of pepper and that sort of thing") }	Mr. James Bland.
<i>Dost Ymillah</i> . . . . . (A Purlblind and Opaque Flunkey) . .	Mr. Caulfield.
<i>Falderal Lal Singh</i> . . . Mr. Clark.	<i>Ameer Stikh</i> . . . Mr. Coe.

*The Princess Zaida, Surnamed The Queen of Beauty.* { *The Rajah's talented and spirited Daughter—in every sense of the word a charming woman; projectress of the Grand Mulligatawny Industrial Exhibition and Pretty-fellow of the Royal College of Fairies . . . . .* } Miss P. Horton.  
*The Smallest Part in the Piece . . . . .* Miss Caulfield,

### The Picnic in the Desert.

Scene 1.—An Impenetrable Forest.

Grand Scena by Mr. Buckstone (accompanied by Extraordinary Movements by Miss A. Romer).

### 2.—The Genie's Subterranean Palace.

A very Desert Island.

Act II., Scene 1.—Public Place in Curripoudah (the Capital Portion of Mulligatawny).

A city in a temporary state of Indian Pickle—Arrivals for the Grand Mulligatawny Exhibition of All Nations. The Musical Contributions of All Nations to the Exhibition, by Miss P. Horton.

The Queen of Beauty's Sanctum Sanctorum.

### 3.—Privy Council Chamber of the Rajah of Mulligatawny.

The Queen of Beauty's Crystal Palace.

"The Second Calender" (6d.) is published in Webster's *National Acting Drama*, and may be had in the Theatre.

Orchestra Stalls (which may be retained the whole of the evening), 5s. each. First Price—Boxes, 5s.; Pit, 3s.; Amphitheatre, 2s.; Gallery, 1s. Second Price—Boxes, 3s.; Pit, 2s.; Amphitheatre, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.

The Doors to be opened at Half-past Six, and the performance to commence at Seven o'clock. [*Vivat Regina.*]

TO-MORROW will be produced a New and Original Comic Drama, in One Act, to be called

### GOOD FOR NOTHING.

The Characters by Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Howe, Mr. Parselle, Mr. Clark, and Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

On WEDNESDAY, will be revived, with New Scenery, &c., Douglas Jerrold's Nautical Drama of

### BLACK-EYED SUSAN.

*William* . . . (First Time at this Theatre) . . . Mr. Davenport.

On THURSDAY, will be produced, a New and Original Comedy, in Two Acts, called

### PRESENTED AT COURT.

Principal Characters by Mr. Davenport, Mr. Howe, Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Parselle, Mr. Lambert, Mr. C. Selby, Mr. Clark, Miss Reynolds, Mrs. L. S. Buckingham, Miss A. Vining, Mrs. Stanley, Mrs. Caulfield, &c.

MR. MACREADY avails himself of the earliest opportunity within his power respectfully to announce to his Friends and the Public that WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, is fixed for his BENEFIT, when he will take his Farewell of the Stage. Particulars will be made known in future advertisements.



The popular favourite, Mr. James Wallack, having recovered from his long and painful illness, will Re-appear in a few days.

TO-MORROW, Goldsmith's Comedy of "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER":—*Mr. Hardcastle*, Mr. Lambert; *Sir Charles Marlow*, Mr. Rogers; *Young Marlow*, Mr. Howe; *Tony Lumpkin*, Mr. Buckstone; *Hastings*, Mr. Parselle; *Diggory*, Mr. Clark; *Mrs. Hardcastle*, Mrs. Stanley; *Miss Neville*, Mrs. L. S. Buckingham; *Miss Hardcastle*, Miss Reynolds. After which, a New and Original Comic Drama, called GOOD FOR NOTHING; Principal Characters by Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Howe, Mr. Parselle, Mr. Clark, and Mrs. Fitzwilliam. With THE SECOND CALENDER! AND THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY WHO HAD THE FIGHT WITH THE GENIE—*Prince Agib*, Miss Annie Romer; *The Ape of the Dead Sea*, Mr. Lebar; *Codju*, Mr. Buckstone; *The Princess Gulnare*, Mrs. L. S. Buckingham; *Jarjarhees*, Mr. Charles Selby; *Zubeydeh*, Mrs. Fitzwilliam; *Cranbourn Ali*, Mr. James Bland; *The Queen of Beauty*, Miss P. Horton

Macready's farewell dinner took place on March 1st, 1851, under the presidency of Bulwer Lytton. The admission ticket bore a facsimile of the signature of Charles Dickens. More than 600 tickets were issued, and the accommodation of the London Tavern proving insufficient for so large a number of guests, the actual scene of the banquet was transferred to the neighbouring Hall of Commerce.

## CHAPTER IX

### “THE FAREWELL OF CHARLES KEAN”

THE Shakespearean, melodramatic, and romantic plays revived by Charles Kean at the Princess's, and again revived for another generation of playgoers by Sir Henry Irving at the Lyceum, are as follows :—

Shakespearean Plays : “Twelfth Night,” “Macbeth,” “Richard the Third,” “Henry the Eighth,” “Hamlet,” “King Lear,” “Merchant of Venice,” “Much Ado About Nothing.”

Melodrama, Tragedy, and Romance : “Louis the Eleventh,” “Corsican Brothers,” “Courier of Lyons,” “Faust and Margaret,” “The Iron Chest.”

In addition to these, Charles Kean revived “Merry Wives of Windsor,” “King John,” Lord Byron's “Sardanapalus,” “The Winter's Tale” (revived by Miss Mary Anderson at the Lyceum during the Irving management), Sheridan's “Pizarro,” “The Gamester,” “A Midsummer-Night's Dream,” “Richard the Second,” “The Tempest,” “Henry the Fifth.”

The Shakespearean revivals under Charles Kean that impressed me most were as follows :—

“A Midsummer-Night's Dream ;” this was produced at the Princess's Theatre on Wednesday, the 15th of October, 1856, with a cast worthy of the occasion. John Ryder, “a fine figure of a man,” indeed, was

Theseus, Prince of Athens ; J. F. Cathcart was Lysander, the lover of Hermia ; merry old Frank Matthews was Quince the carpenter ; F. Cooke, who afterwards migrated to the Olympic with Robson, was Snug the joiner ; Harley, Bottom the weaver ; Saker, Flute the bellows mender ; Drinkwater Meadows, Snout the tinker ; and Barsby, Starveling the tailor. What a splendid crowd of genuine comedians !

More beautiful women have seldom been seen on the stage. Miss Murray was Hippolyta ; Nelly Bufton, Hermia ; and the lovely Miss Heath, with the long masses of wavy golden hair (afterwards Mrs. Wilson Barrett), Helena. Miss F. Ternan and Carlotta Leclercq, celebrated stage beauties, were Oberon and Titania ; Ellen Terry, one of the most ethereal and ideal of children ever seen, was Puck ; and among the pretty fairies were her sister Kate Terry, Marian Taylor, Laura Honey, Miss Desborough, Caroline Adams (the Columbine), and Rose Leclercq, whose sudden and untimely death we have but recently deplored. As to the effect of the fairy scene, I quite agree with the remarks of Mr. Cole, Charles Kean's biographer.

"Nothing could exceed the consistent harmony with which all the varied elements of the play were blended together.

"The introduction to the haunt of the supernatural beings ; the first appearance of Oberon and Titania, with their attendant trains ; the noiseless footsteps of the 'shadow dance' on the moonlit greensward, with the undulating reflections of every rapid and graceful movement ; the wood, peopled with its innumerable fairy legions, whose voices lull their queen to sleep upon a soft bank of sweet scented flowers ; the melodious music

composed by Mendelssohn to the words of the author, in a strain and tone of feeling in intimate sympathy with the subject; the perpetual change of scene and incident; the shifting diorama; the golden beams of the rising sun glittering on the leaves; the gradual dispersion of the mist, discovering the fairy guardians, light and brilliant as gossamer, grouped around the unconscious, sleeping mortals; the dazzling magnificence of the palace of Theseus at the close, thronged on every staircase, balustrade and corridor, with myriads of aerial beings, who join in an unseen and unheard epithalamium on the mortal inmates who have retired to rest; these, in an endless succession of skilfully-blended, pictorial, mechanical and musical effects, overpowered the faculties of the spectators with the influence of an enchanting vision.

"Written description can convey but a faint idea of the glowing, animated reality. The monotonous feelings of every day life were forgotten, and we woke after a three hours' journey into another world, as if from the recollection of a delicious dream. What more convincing evidence could be given of the potency of the spell than a mention of the fact that 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' was repeated for one hundred and fifty nights during this and the following season?"

Grieve, Gordon, and Lloyds painted the best part of the scenery; that excellent musician and composer, J. L. Hatton, was in the conductor's chair, and the dances were fashioned by Oscar Byrne.

Next I should place on the list "A Winter's Tale," although it preceded "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" by a few months, having been first performed on Monday, the 28th of April, 1856, at the Princess's Theatre.

This Shakespearean revival must ever be memorable in

that it introduced to the stage of London for the first time Ellen Terry, who appeared as Mamillius, the little son of Leontes, King of Sicilia, played of course by Charles Kean.

Ellen Terry has already given her recollections of Mamillius, so I can do no better than repeat them in her own words. I was lucky enough, a few years ago, to secure from an old book shop an album containing several important photographs of the Charles Kean period, and amongst them is one of little Mamillius, sausage curls, go-cart and all.

"How my young heart," she writes, "swelled with pride—I can recall the sensation now—when I was told what I had to do! There is something, I suppose, in a woman's nature which always makes her recollect how she was dressed at any especially eventful moment of her life, and I can see myself, as though it were yesterday, in my little red and white coat—very short—very pink silk stockings, and a row of tight sausage curls—my mother was always very careful that they should be in perfect order and regularity—clustered round my head. A small go-cart, which it was my duty to drag about the stage, was also a keen source of pride, and a great trouble to me.

"My first dramatic failure dates from that go-cart. I was told to run about with it on the stage, and while carrying out my instructions with more vigour than discretion, tripped over the handle, and down I came on my back. A titter ran through the house, and I felt that my career as an actress was ruined for ever. Bitter and copious were the tears I shed—but I am not sure that the incident has materially altered the course of my life."



CHAS. KEAN AND ELLEN TERRY.  
(Leontes, Mamillius—"Winter's Tale.")



Charles Keen and Mrs. Charles Keen, were at court Leontes, King of Sicily, and Hermione his Queen. John Brady was Polixenes, King of Bithynia. Charles Keen made great point of turning Bohemia into Bithynia, on the authority of Sir Thomas Hanmer, a Shakespearean scholar. As he said in one of his elaborate prefaces, it "enabled me to represent the costumes of the inhabitants of Asia Minor at a corresponding period, associated so intimately with Greece, and acquiring additional interest from close proximity to the Homeric Kingdom of Troy." And he went on to say:

"The Phrygian dress presents a marked distinction between the two races that constitute the chief actors in the drama, while at the same time scope is afforded for the introduction of customs common to both. A leading instance is furnished in the pastoral scene of the fourth act, where the festivities applicable to the season of sheep-shearing take place, and in which Shakespeare brings in, for the purpose of a dance, twelve rustics, 'who have made themselves all men of hair, and call themselves Satyrs.' I have here ventured to introduce one of those festivals in honour of Bacchus, known under the title of 'Dionysia,' wherein similar disguises were used, while the actors indulged in mad enthusiasm and extravagant merriment.

"For the purpose of presenting with closer accuracy the domestic manners of the period, Leontes and his Queen, Hermione, together with their kingly guest, are first discovered towards the termination of a 'feast,' in the evening before the intended departure of Polixenes. As dancing and music invariably formed a portion of such entertainments, a representation of the celebrated 'Pyrrhic dance,' so popular throughout the principal



States of Greece for its martial character, has been attempted.

“Later in the play, ‘Time, as Chorus,’ has been restored in accordance with the poet’s conception. By this restoration, the lapse of sixteen years, supposed to have taken place from the birth of Perdita until she is seen as the Shepherdess in the fourth act, is rendered more intelligible. To carry out the idea, a classical figure, more in harmony with the character of the play as now represented, has been preferred to the ordinary old man with his scythe and hour glass, who was unknown in classic ages. Chronos, the ancient representative of Time, has been chosen, and I have ventured to associate him with an allegorical tableau of Selene, or the moon and stars (personified), sinking before the car of Phœbus, which rises with all its attributes of splendour. Each figure is taken from the antique, or from the works of Flaxman.

“The theatre at Syracuse has been selected for the ceremony of the trial of Queen Hermione, as it is known that in Greece such edifices were frequently used for legislative or judicial proceedings, and an opportunity is thus afforded for the introduction of a scenic display equally novel and interesting.”

But there were two more Terrys in the cast : Benjamin Terry, the father of all the Terrys, who was an assistant stage manager and actor of small parts under Kean at the Princess’s—he played the Officer of a court of judicature—and Kate Terry, who had to be contented this time with the servant to the old Shepherd played by Drinkwater Meadows. Harley made an admirable Autolycus ; Miss Heath was Florizel ; and Perdita was played by Carlotta Leclercq, then in the perfection of

youthful beauty. I know that all the enthusiastic young students at Oxford, and they have ever been admirers of that irresistible "*beauté de la jeunesse*," had the walls of their rooms adorned with innumerable pictures — probably by Adolphe Beau — of Carlotta Leclercq as Perdita.

I thought at that time that I had seen nothing so wonderful as "A Classical Allegory," representing the Course of Time: Selene or Luna in her car, accompanied by the Stars (personified), sinking before the approach of Phœbus; Chronos, as Time, surmounting the globe, describes the events of the sixteen years supposed to have elapsed; and, later on, the Ascent of Phœbus in the Chariot of the Sun.

I never cared for Charles Kean's Hamlet or his King Lear a little bit; in fact, I never understood the supreme beauty of the play of Hamlet—heretical as it may be to say so—until I saw Fechter play the part later on in this very theatre, to the horror, be it said, of all the admirers of Kean as well as Phelps. They joined voices in their cordial detestation and execration of the French Hamlet. I can assure you the young enthusiasts of that period did not have a very easy or merry time of it with the veterans. And I suppose it is just the same to-day. "The old order changeth, giving place to new." The youngsters and the veterans are perpetually at loggerheads; the "old school" and the "new school" ever were, and ever will be, at war.

One of my most delightful memories of the old Princess's Theatre in the Charles Kean days is in connection with the famous revival of Shakespeare's "Richard the Second," which has never been seen on the English stage since 1857. "Between the third and the fourth acts," says Charles Kean, "I have ventured to

introduce the triumphant entry into London of the 'mounting' Bolingbroke, followed by the deposed and captive King, 'in grief and patience,' thus embodying in action what Shakespeare has so beautifully described in the speech of York to his Duchess towards the close of the play."

In these later days of superb pageant, when the sight-seer has been treated to such glorious studies in effect, movement, and colour, as Henry Irving's Cathedral Scene in "Much Ado about Nothing," his Hall of Convention in "Robespierre," which is simply Carlyle illuminated, a scene never equalled and scarcely likely to be surpassed; and Beerbohm Tree's Forum scene in "Julius Caesar," perhaps even such a splendid revival as Charles Kean's "Richard the Second," might run the risk of being despised. But it was a grand thing for all that, and a perfect triumph of stage management.

In the crowd were at least two actors destined to become famous. They were "supers," and they never denied having been so. At any rate, when I have occasionally alluded to the fact that David James and Edward Righton came on in the crowd at the Princess's in 1857, they did not rush into print or air their offended dignity before the astonished public. The fact is, I do not think that either David James or Edward Righton were ashamed of having risen from the ranks.

They both told me Charles Kean's method of stage managing an excited crowd. He divided it into sections and groups, and gave to each some little drama to enact, so as to lend variety and impulse to the picture. In fact, the group in which Edward Righton was included was provided with words to

speaking, and spoken they were at every rehearsal—save the final one, much to the chagrin of all concerned.

The last time I saw poor Teddy Righton, looking the picture of health, on the Fort at Margate, in the early summer of 1898, he recounted to me his boyish agony when, after having been presented with a part to speak on the stage for the first time in his life, and after having bragged about it to his young companions, he was told at the last rehearsal that no words were to be spoken, and he must content himself with gesticulation and dumb show.

The acting honours in connection with the revival of "Richard the Second" were divided between Charles Kean, John Cooper, Walter Lacy, and John Ryder.

This was the letter that Righton wrote to me on the subject of Charles Kean's revival of Shakespeare's "Richard the Second," which at one time was in preparation for revival at the Lyceum.

"It is to be hoped that Sir Henry Irving will include the episode (introduced by the late Charles Kean), the entry of Bolingbroke, in his revival of 'Richard the Second.' It formed a most welcome relief to the tragedy, and included one of the most remarkable crowds ever seen on the English stage. One of the most remarkable, for in my time I can remember three, each of them extraordinary in their way. In 'Coriolanus,' at Sadler's Wells Theatre, the supers, instructed by Phelps, were little short of actors, and, in the scene where the mob banishes the proud General, acted with such intensity that, on the fall of the act-drop, after the usual compliment had been paid to the great actor, a cry went up from the audience which at first nobody could under-

stand, but which soon resolved itself into 'Supers!' 'By gad!' said Phelps, 'they are calling for the supers; and, damme! they deserve it—I never saw better acting in my life!' The act-drop was then raised, disclosing the unusual spectacle of the supers 'taking a call,' loudly cheered by the spectators.

"Another admirable crowd was that in Beerbohm Tree's 'Julius Cæsar,' which was certainly a great improvement on that of the German company that visited Drury Lane a few years since, and which we were then told was perfection. I always venture to disagree with this unrestricted praise, and now think it can fairly be bestowed on Mr. Tree's production, the difference between the German and English method of stage management being that, in the case of the Germans, the great speech of Mark Antony was almost entirely lost in the noise and bustle of the mob; whereas, at Her Majesty's, without the action seeming to stop for a moment, every sentence was heard, especially that in which the cunning Antony stirs up the citizens by telling them that Julius Cæsar has left them so much money each, which, I venture to think, is the point of the scene, since it incites the people to the rebellion that Antony strives to bring about.

"Charles Kean's crowd in 'Richard the Second' was unique, both in the rehearsal and performance. I remember thinking my fortune made when one night, after playing a small part, in which I had to be kicked about the stage, I was sent for by Ellis, our stage manager, who handed me a 'part' in the new piece, saying that that was my reward for acting the 'kicker' so naturally as to actually make Charles Kean smile. What did I care that those kicks made me almost cry with pain? I was on the high road to fame, for was I not chosen above

all the other young ones for a part in the new piece ; and was not *my name in the bill* ?

"I was called to rehearsal next day ; and proud I was, the hero of a capital comedy scene, in which I was assisted by three other young artists as ambitious as myself. We were all made to promise secrecy as to the issue of our characters ; and I could not but pity my dressing-room mates at being left so far behind me. One day there was a general rehearsal, to which everybody was called. 'Begin !' shouted Ellis. Clang ! clang ! clang ! chimed a peal of huge bells. Tootle ! tootle ! tootle ! struck up the orchestra. 'Hooray ! yah !' yelled the crowd. 'Why don't you go on ?' bawled Ellis. 'They won't hear me,' I ventured to expostulate. 'What the devil is that to you, Sir ?' demanded Ellis. 'Go on ! and'—to others—'you too, Sir ! and you !' 'What, all at once ?' I said. 'Yes, and speak up ; and move about as you have been taught !' Then I realised that all my mates whom I had lorded it over had been secretly rehearsing just as I had, and that my scene, for which I had often so eagerly searched my Shakespeare, was but part of the noise and confusion of a mob.

"But what a mob !—made up of historic characters and all sorts and conditions of people, who contributed to the general effect ; the constant movements and chatter of us green ones, with our well-rehearsed little scenes, which were found to dovetail perfectly ; the itinerant acrobats and dancers ; the entrance of Charles Kean as Richard, on horseback, with bowed head ; and Kate Terry as a boy starting out of the crowd into the procession, and flinging a handful of earth at Richard's head, exclaiming, 'Behold King Richard, who has done so much good for the kingdom of England !' the groaning

and hooting of the people, not only on the ground, but in balconies and at the windows, which changed to shouts of joy and exclamations of delight at sight of Bolingbroke on a noble prancing steed ; the attempt of the people to crowd in upon him to press his hand, to hug his feet, and even to kiss the tail of his horse (which was actually done by an enthusiastic young lady) ; the showers of flowers which fell at his feet and all around him ; and then, when the procession was nearing an end the crowding in of the mob upon Bolingbroke, and the soldiers keeping them back against immense odds and midst the screaming of women and their cries for help, while men shouted and children were almost trampled on ; the clanging of the huge bells, and the sound of the disappearing band, on which scene of confusion and general riot the curtain fell. Even at this distance of time one feels proud to have been associated with such a ' mob.' "

On one point only was my friend Edward Righton incorrect. Bolingbroke in the procession preceded the deposed king ; he did not follow him.

The bill of the play may be found interesting, for it is typical of the Charles Kean management ; and supports my argument that our new dramatic Rome was not built in a day.

ROYAL PRINCESS'S THEATRE,  
OXFORD STREET.

Under the Management of MR. CHARLES KEAN, 7, Upper Hyde Park  
Street, Hyde Park Square.

KING RICHARD THE SECOND.

THE two latest Shakespearean revivals at this theatre, namely, *The Winter's Tale* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, afforded opportunities of illustrating the manners, costumes, and architecture of ancient Greece, as once co-existent in the cities of Syracuse and Athens.

Quitting the far-famed regions of classical antiquity, I now return to

the homestead of history, and offer to the public one of those exciting dramas drawn from our own annals, in which our national poet has depicted the fierce and turbulent passions of our ancestors, and thus immortalised events of the deepest interest to every English mind. Nearly two centuries and a half divide us from Shakespeare; yet he still lives to the world with his "fame unparalleled," equally unapproachable and imperishable. His historical plays present retrospective truth, encircled by a halo of poetic genius; and nowhere has he more conspicuously combined accurate statement of fact with beauty of language than in the tragedy of *King Richard the Second*. The action extends over little more than the two closing years of that unhappy monarch's reign—those brief but eventful years which teach so terrible a lesson, exhibiting as they do the strength and weakness of humanity, the elevation of one king upon the ruin of another, the gorgeous pageantry of royal state contrasted with the dungeon and the assassin's stroke. Although the infirmities and irresolution of Richard's character are drawn with unsparing fidelity, yet England's weak and erring king breathes his sorrow in words so sweetly touching, that the heart responds to the poet's mighty influence, and throbs with sympathy for woe, although produced by wrong, pitying the ill fated, and pardoning the ill-deserving monarch. To show the importance of the period to the progress of civilization, it may be remarked that the same historical page which is blotted with the recital of "murders, treasons, and detested sins," preserves the memory of two illustrious men, whose light was undimmed by the dark clouds that obscured the political horizon, and whose names will ever remain associated with the advancement of literature and reform.

Geoffrey Chaucer, known as the father of English poetry, whose elegant taste refined and smoothed our native tongue, imbibed the same atmosphere that was impregnated with the perjury and faithlessness of conflicting parties, and indited his ever-memorable "*Canterbury Tales*," not long before the throne of England was yielded to the younger branch of the Plantagenets.

John Wickliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation," made himself heard amidst the angry roar of contending passions; and in the hearts of fiery and seditious men sowed the seed, which, after a growth of one hundred and fifty years, was destined to expand into the standard religion of our country.

In the present stage representation I have endeavoured to produce a true portraiture of mediæval history. The Lists at Coventry—the Fleet at Milford Haven—the Castles of Pembroke and Flint—the Garden, where "Old Adam's likeness" startles the Queen with his "unpleasing news"—the Great Hall at Westminster, rebuilt by Richard, in his pride of kingly sway, and afterwards selected as the place where unkinged Richard was constrained "with his own hands to give away his crown"—the Royal Chambers and the Royal Prison—are all either actually restored, or represented in conformity with contemporaneous authorities. Between



the third and fourth acts I have ventured to introduce the triumphal entry into London of the "mounting" Bolingbroke, followed by the deposed and captive King, "in grief and patience;" thus embodying in action what Shakespeare has so beautifully described in the speech of York to his Duchess, towards the close of the play.

The few sentences intervening amidst the clamorous acclamations of the mob in this Historical Episode are selected from the *Chronicles* which relate to the circumstances of that remarkable event; and are added with the view of reviving, as far as possible, a scene that actually occurred in London upwards of four hundred and fifty years since. The entire *tableau* may be considered as an historical picture, in which the creations of the painter's art are endowed with animated reality.

An increasing taste for recreation wherein instruction is blended with amusement, has for some time been conspicuous in the English public; and surely, an attempt to render dramatic representations conducive to the diffusion of knowledge—to surround the glowing imagery of the great Poet with accompaniments true to the time of which he writes—realizing the scenes and actions which he describes—exhibiting men as they once lived—can scarcely detract from the enduring influence of his genius. Repeated success justifies the conviction that I am acting in accordance with the general feeling. When plays, which formerly commanded but occasional repetition, are enabled, by no derogatory means, to attract audiences for successive months, I cannot be wrong in presuming that the course I have adopted is supported by the irresistible force of public opinion, expressed in the suffrages of an overwhelming majority.

The Music throughout the piece, including the overture and *entr' actes*, has been composed and adapted by Mr. J. L. Hatton, in accordance with the character of the period. The tune which accompanies the Dance of Itinerant Fools, introduced in the Episode for the purpose of amusing the expectant multitude, is adapted from an air said to be as old as the reign of Edward the Second, and is now published in a work by W. Chappell, Esq., F.S.A., entitled "*Popular Music of the Olden Time.*" Strutt remarks that a vestige of the Fool's Dance is preserved in a manuscript written and illuminated in the reign of Edward the Third, the Dancers being equipped in the Dresses appropriated to the Fools. The Morris Dance, which afterwards became so popular, is supposed to have been derived from the Fool's Dance; and thence are traced the bells which characterised the Morris dancers. The ancient popular Welsh air of "*Sweet Richard*," introduced in the overture, and again in the *entr' actes* preceding the third act and episode, is supposed to be the production of some contemporary bard, and served to keep alive the feeling of regret for King Richard's fate.

The Privy Council Chamber, the restoration of the Welsh Castles, the Traitor's Gate at the Tower and St. George's Hall at Windsor, have been painted (by Mr. Grieve and assistants) under the authority of Anthony Salvin, Esq., F.S.A. To Henry Shaw, Esq., F.S.A., I am indebted for

much zealous assistance, besides supplying the necessary drawings, and superintending the preparations for the combat at Coventry, the bed room of the dying John of Gaunt, and many of the accessories introduced into other scenes. The Garden at Langley, the interior of the Duke of Lancaster's Palace, the streets of Old London, Westminster Hall, and the Dungeon at Pomfret, have been sanctioned by George Godwin, Esq., F.S.A.; while Thomas Willement, Esq., F.S.A., and Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster, have afforded me the information requisite for the heraldic adornments. I am also indebted to G. Scharf, Esq., jun., F.S.A., for many valuable suggestions.

The French metrical history of the deposition of King Richard the Second, written by a contemporary, and preserved in the British Museum, affords undoubted evidence of the *costume* of the period in its illuminated pages; and the knowledge of my valued friend, Colonel Hamilton Smith, in this branch, has been freely imparted in aid of my present undertaking.

In addition to these authorities, several manuscripts and books in the British Museum, together with the works of Strutt, Meyrick, Fairholt, and Shaw have been consulted.

By the preceding statement I guarantee the truthfulness and fidelity of the entire picture; while I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance that has been so liberally afforded to me by men eminent for their antiquarian knowledge, and whose conviction of the usefulness of my efforts is a gratifying encouragement to adhere to the plan of illustration I have hitherto adopted.

CHARLES KEAN.

Monday, March 23rd, 1857, and during the week, the Performances will commence with a Farce, in One Act, by Mr. David Fisher, entitled

#### MUSIC HATH CHARMS.

<i>Mr. Alfred Poppleton Pertinax</i> . . . . .	Mr. David Fisher.
<i>Captain Bremont</i> . . . . . Mr. Raymond.	<i>M. Beauval</i> . . . . . Mr. Barsby.
<i>M. Rabinel</i> . . . . .	Mr. Brazier.
<i>Madame Mathilde de la Roche</i> . . . . .	Miss Carlotta Leclercq.
<i>Lucille</i> . . . . .	Miss M. Ternan.

After which (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th Times) Shakespeare's Tragedy of

#### KING RICHARD THE SECOND.

The Scenery under the direction of Mr. Grieve, and Painted by Mr. Grieve, Mr. W. Gordon, Mr. F. Lloyds, Mr. Cuthbert, Mr. Dayes, Mr. Morris, and Assistants.

The Music under the Direction of Mr. J. L. Hatton. The Dance and Action by Mr. Oscar Byrne.

The Decorations and Appointments by Mr. E. W. Bradwell.

The Dresses by Mrs. and Miss Hoggins. The Machinery by Mr. G. Hodsdon. Perruquier—Mr. Asplin, of 13, New Bond Street.

<i>King Richard the Second</i> . . . . .	Mr. Charles Kean.
<i>Edmund of Langley, Duke of York</i> . . . . .	{ Mr. Cooper.
<i>John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster</i> . . . . .	{ Mr. Walter Lacy.
<i>Henry, surnamed Bolingbroke</i> . . . . .	{ (Duke of Hereford, son to John of Gaunt, afterwards King Henry IV.) } Mr. Ryder.
<i>Duke of Aumerle (Son to the Duke of York)</i> . . . . .	Mr. Brazier.
<i>Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. F. Cathcart.
<i>Duke of Surrey</i> . . . . .	Mr. G. Everett.
<i>Lord Berkeley</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. Collett.
<i>Sir John Bushy</i> . . . . .	{ Mr. Rolleston.
<i>Sir William Bagot</i> . . . . .	{ (Creatures to King Richard) } Mr. Warren.
<i>Sir Thomas Green</i> . . . . .	{ Mr. Barsby.
<i>Earl of Northumberland</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Mellon.
<i>Henry Percy (his Son)</i> . . . . .	Miss Bufton. <i>Lord Willoughby</i> Mr. F. Cooke.
<i>Lord Ross</i> . . . . .	Mr. Terry. <i>Lord Fitzwater</i> Mr. Wilson.
<i>Bishop of Carlisle</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Butler.
<i>Sir Pierce of Exton</i> . . . . .	Mr. Paulo.
<i>Sir Stephen Scroop</i> . . . . .	Mr. Graham.
<i>Two Gardeners</i> . . . . .	Mr. Meadows and Mr. Morris.
<i>Keeper of the Prison</i> . . . . .	Mr. Collier. <i>Groom</i> . . . . .
<i>Queen to King Richard</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Charles Kean.
<i>Duchess of Glo'ster</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Ternan. <i>Duchess of York</i> Miss Desborough.
<i>Ladies attending on the Queen</i> . . . . .	Miss Daly and Miss J. Lovell.
<i>Boy, in the Episode</i> . . . . .	Miss Kate Terry.
<i>Lords, Herald, Officers, Soldiers, Keeper, and Attendants, &amp;c., &amp;c.</i>	

*Scene—Dispersedly in England and Wales.*

Act I., Scene 1.—London—Privy Council Chamber in the Palace of Westminster.

The Walls and Roof are decorated with the Badges and Cognizances of Richard the Second.

Scene 2.—A Room in the Duke of Lancaster's Palace.

Scene 3.—Gosford Green, near Coventry.

Lists set out for the Combat between Bolingbroke and Norfolk. The Royal Pavilion with King Richard seated on a throne, and many Noblemen with him.

Act II., Scene 1.—A Bed-room in Ely House.

Scene 2.—Entrance to St. Stephen's Chapel (Restored).

Scene 3.—The Wilds in Gloucestershire.

Advance of Bolingbroke's Army.

Act III., Scene 1.—Milford Harbour, in Wales, with Pembroke Castle (Restored).

Richard's Fleet at Anchor.

Scene 2. Wales—In the Neighbourhood of Flint Castle.

Scene 3.—Flint Castle (Restored).

#### HISTORICAL EPISODE—LONDON.

The Fronts of the Houses adorned with Tapestry and Hangings, as on Occasions of Public Rejoicing. A Vast Concourse of People occupying the Streets, in expectation of the arrival of Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, and the deposed and captive King, Richard the Second. The Incidental Amusements of the Crowd are taken from Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the English*, including

The Dance of Itinerant Fools.

(The Dance Tune is supposed to be as Old as the Reign of Edward the Second.)

## TRUMPET MARCH.—ENTER PROCESSION.

City Trumpeters.  
 City Banner and Banner of St. Paul.      Guards.  
 Lord Mayor's Banner.      City Sword and Mace Bearer.  
 Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London.      Aldermen.  
 Banner of the Mercers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Mercers (Armed).  
 Banner of the Grocers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Grocers (Armed).  
 Banner of the Fishmongers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Fishmongers (Armed).  
 Banner of the Goldsmiths' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Goldsmiths (Armed).  
 Banner of the Linen Armourers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Linen Armourers (Armed).  
 Banner of the Saddlers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Saddlers (Armed).  
 Banner of the Bakers' Company.  
 Captain and Company of the Bakers (Armed).  
 Royal Banners.      Noblemen in Civil Costume.      Minstrels  
 Duke of Lancaster's Banner.      Girls with Flowers.  
 Knight in Armour.      Bolingbroke      Knight in Armour.  
 Knight in Armour.      on Horseback.      Knight in Armour.  
 Knight in Armour.      Guards.      Knight in Armour.  
 Knight in Armour.      King Richard      Knight in Armour.  
 Knight in Armour.      on Horseback.      Knight in Armour.  
 Knight in Armour.      Guards.      Knight in Armour.  
 Captain and Band of City Archers.

Act IV., Scene 1.—Langley—The Duke of York's Garden.

Garden of the Fourteenth Century, adapted from the MS. of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, Bodleian Library.

Scene 2.—London—Westminster Hall.

Act V., Scene 1.—London—The Traitors' Gate of the Tower.

Scene 2.—A Room in the Duke of York's Palace.

Scene 3.—Pomfret—The Dungeon of the Castle.

Scene 4.—St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle.

Shakespeare's Tragedy of KING RICHARD THE SECOND will be repeated Every Evening, preceded by the Farce of MUSIC HATH CHARMS.

Books of Shakespeare's "King Richard the Second," as arranged for representation at the Royal Princess's Theatre, with Notes, by Mr. Charles Kean, may be had at the Box-office of the Theatre, price 1s. each.

Stage Manager, Mr. George Ellis; Treasurer, Mr. S. Lambert; Box Book-keeper, Mr. Massingham.

Dress Circle, 5s.; Boxes, 4s.; Pit, 2s.; Gallery, 1s. Second Price—Dress Circle, 2s. 6d.; Boxes, 2s.; Pit, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. Orchestra Stalls, 6s.; Private Boxes, £2 12s. 6d., £2 2s., and £1 11s. 6d.

Box-office open from 11 till a Quarter to 5 o'clock. Doors open at Half-past 6. Performances Commence at 7.

Private Boxes and Stalls may be obtained at the Libraries, and of Mr. Massingham, at the Box-office of the Theatre, Oxford Street. Any person wishing to secure places can do so by paying 1s. for every Party not exceeding Six, which Places will be retained until 9 o'clock in the Boxes, and in the Stalls the Whole Evening.

The Saloons under the direction of G. Epitau, of the Opera Colonnade. Gallery Door in Castle Street. Children in arms will not be admitted.

In the romantic dramas that Charles Kean and Henry Irving have played in common, I think that I preferred Charles Kean to Irving in "The Corsican Brothers"; but Irving was his predecessor's superior, as Mephistopheles, Lesurques, Dubosc, and Louis the Eleventh, save on one point.

In this last dramatic and interesting play a great feature is made of the praying to the leaden images arranged round the cap of the King. When the "Angelus" bell sounds, off goes his "cap of maintenance," and the King is suddenly deep in his devotions. Now Kean at this moment was desperately in earnest and absorbed. He seemed like a veritable saint, though the audience knew he was a hypocrite. But when Henry Irving said his prayers, he always seemed to have his tongue in his cheek, and by facial expression, hinted to the audience what a contemptible humbug the monarch was.

Charles Kean, as was the case with Macready before him, retired amidst a flourish of trumpets, literary, dramatic, and otherwise, and was duly proclaimed the saviour of the legitimate drama. From all time there has been a saviour of the legitimate drama such as a John Kemble, a Macready, a Charles Kean, a Phelps, or an Irving. History repeats itself: a warrior always jumps out of the Trojan horse! There was no Campbell present to hymn to Charles Kean an ode, as on the occasion when John Kemble retired, and was told—

"His was the spell o'er hearts  
That only acting lends,  
The youngest of the sister arts  
Where all their beauty blends.  
For poetry can ill express  
Full many a tone of thought sublime,  
And painting mute and motionless  
Steals but one partial glance from time.

But by the mighty actor brought  
Illusion's wedded triumphs come,  
Verse ceases to be airy thought  
And sculpture to be dumb !"

By the way, as a matter of theatrical history, the silver vase designed by Flaxman and presented to John Philip Kemble when Young had finished declaiming Campbell's Ode, was purchased years after by John L. Toole, and presented to his beloved friend and comrade, Henry Irving.

The banquet and testimonial to Charles Kean took place at the St. James's Hall on the 20th of July, 1859, and was mainly organised by his old Eton schoolfellows, who did not neglect the toast "Floreat Etona." The chair was to have been taken by the poetic Earl of Carlisle; but he had just been called away to take up the duties of Viceroy of Ireland; so the literary Duke of Newcastle took his place. Amongst the distinguished guests were the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord John Manners (now Duke of Rutland), Spencer Walpole, Sir Walter Minto Farquhar, Bart., father of Gilbert Farquhar the actor, Sir Francis Hastings Doyle the poet, Serjeant Kinglake, A. J. B. Beresford Hope, W. M. Thackeray, Clarkson Stanfield, David Roberts, Sims Reeves, John Timbs, E. W. Godwin, the antiquary, and Mr. Bodham Donne, the Examiner of Stage Plays.

Mr. Gladstone's speech, in proposing the health of the Chairman, the Duke of Newcastle, well embodies the general sentiment of the occasion; he said:

"I can, too, render witness to Mr. Kean as being a public benefactor. If anything could add to my individual satisfaction in rendering that witness, it

would be the circumstance that I am politically connected by representation, and have for many years been connected, with one of the great seats of learning and education in England. I see in our friend one of those who has ever asserted the social brotherhood that exists between all true and genuine instruments of human cultivation. He has said truly that in the drama the greatest powers of the human mind have been exhibited. This most influential instrument, which has sometimes grovelled in the mire, and which has rarely been appreciated to the full extent of its capacity, Mr. Kean has devoted almost immeasurable labour to raising up to its due and natural elevation. This is the service that he has conferred upon the age; this is the service that we are here to commemorate; and I pray you to drink, as it ought to be drunk, the health of my noble friend, the Chairman; because he has given us the advantage of his presence, of his carefully matured thoughts, of his powerful expression, in order to convey to the world that which we feel, and that which we desire to say and record. I commend to you 'The Health of his Grace the Duke of Newcastle.' "

On such an occasion it was not likely that the name of Mrs. Charles Kean would be neglected. The Duke of Newcastle said :

" I am conscious that I stand in the presence of that lady, and I know enough of her delicacy of mind to know that it would be most displeasing to her, if upon this occasion, and in so large an assembly as this, I were to enter into any lengthened eulogy of her character. I know that she will only value the compliment

which we now pay her as reflecting upon her husband, and as showing that she has participated in all his labours. She has shared in his triumphs, and she rewards his labours by her devoted affection. But I may be allowed, even in her presence, to say that she has exhibited a bright example to the English stage in her career. In no respect have Mr. and Mrs. Kean brought greater honour upon their establishment, in nothing have they more distinguished themselves in their management of the Princess's Theatre, than in the interest which they have shown, in the almost domestic and affectionate care which has been taken, of those who are engaged there. They have watched over their interests; they have watched over their morality and their happiness. They have attended to their health; they have made the Princess's more like a great domestic establishment than a public institution in which people have no care for those who serve them, provided they fulfil the duties they have to perform. I say, then, honour to them, and especial honour to Mrs. Kean in setting so bright an example."

On the 29th of August, 1859, Charles Kean finally retired from management, and appeared as Cardinal Wolsey in "Henry the Eighth."

This seems to me to be an appropriate time to introduce the name of one who, by his devoted love for the drama, his sound judgment and his enormous influence, did as much for the welfare and elevation of this beautiful art as any man of his time. I allude, of course, to the best friend I ever had in 'my life, Mr. J. M. Levy, the editor and principal proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, on whose staff I had the proud privi-



lege to serve as dramatic critic and general writer from 1871 to the beginning of 1899.

The devoted friend of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean from the starting of their career, he lived to be the friend also and staunch patron of the Bancrofts, Henry Irving, to whom he was deeply attached, Johnny Toole, Wilson Barrett, John Hare, and every actor and actress of distinction or musical genius of his time. Mr. J. M. Levy's hospitable home was ever the rendezvous of all that was brightest and best connected with the dramatic and musical arts.

In the old days of Doughty Street here came John Oxenford, Edmund Yates, Henry Byron, George Augustus Sala, Howard Russell, E. L. Blanchard, Morris Barnett, the charming dramatist, Henry Russell, the singer, entertainer, and author of the immortal "Cheer Boys, Cheer," Edward Dicey, Campbell Clarke, the gentle Thornton Hunt, and many more.

In Russell Square, the same delightful gatherings were continued. At Lancaster Gate, on the occasion of the Sunday receptions, I have met more dramatic, musical, and literary celebrities than in any drawing room in the kingdom; and though in the days of 51 Grosvenor Street, declining health necessarily checked the brilliance of the hospitality of other days, still a Sunday never passed without a gathering of old friends round the table of one of the "grandest old men" I have ever met or by whose friendship I have been helped and honoured.

The enthusiast who served him well and to the best of his ability he never neglected, and he would fight for him as if he were his own son. A juster man never lived. There was no weakness or indecision about him. He could be severe when severity was justified; but he never

turned a deaf ear to any living soul in trouble, doubt, or anxiety, who appealed to him for his invaluable counsel or affectionate sympathy. A better judge of a play or of acting I have never met; and though he delighted in independence in criticism, and knew that the art he so loved was assisted by it, still I have often seen him deeply moved when grim necessity required that one of his dear friends should suffer pain from comments in the paper that he virtually founded by his tactful resource and clear-sighted judgment.

Sometimes on an important occasion, when a new play was produced on a Saturday night, he would ask me to come the following Sunday afternoon and read my criticism before it was put into type. At any stinging passage he would wince as if the pain had been inflicted on him personally; and then he would add, with one of his delightful chuckles teeming with humour, "It's God's truth, Clement, all of it. But it will hurt the poor fellow, so can't you tone it down a bit?" Of course I did so.

I wrote the following words when my large-hearted and beloved old friend died at his pretty house, Florence Villa, Ramsgate, in 1888:—

"I stood the other morning at the grave, and saw lowered into the earth, covered with flowers from faithful and affectionate friends, the last of one who, in his lifetime, was the best friend that man ever had. No kindlier heart, no more sympathetic soul, no better guide, no truer counsellor, a man more just and honourable in all his dealings I have ever known, than Mr. J. M. Levy, who honoured me for many a long year with his confidence and encouraged me with his counsel.

"When very young, quite unasked, he took me by the

hand, and promised me, there and then, his faithful support if I only proved to him that I was worthy of it. That promise he kept to the very letter ; and from that instant never swerved in his determination to shield me in the battle that every journalist must fight if he be earnest in his work, and independent in his course of action. No one knows better than I do how often I have tried that trust, and in the accidents of life have tested the truth of that sincere friendship. Never once, from that day to this, did he feel bound to resent the impetuosity of youth, or to check the judgment of maturer years ; he passed over in silence the errors that he most deeply felt, but he was the first to encourage and applaud the successes that soften the bitterness of daily life.

“ At the most anxious and trying moments of a long career, when others have withdrawn their confidence owing to their own conviction, or the pressure put upon them, it was Mr. Levy who stood out and offered his hand and help. To forget such kindnesses and to ignore such invaluable support would be on my part an act of ingratitude, and a proof that I had no appreciation of the finer qualities of human nature. Often and often whilst working my way in other departments of literature, I have been cordially thanked by this one or that for giving them a start, for recognising their ambition, for printing this story or that poem, for being the ‘ literary godfather,’ as they call it, to this man or that woman, who, in after years, have made a success, but never forgot the accident that helped them.

“ These are among the pleasant moments of life. It is then that I have never failed to remember my best and truest friend ; it is then that I recall what he did for me ; it is then that I pass in review the years gone by, and have, I trust, tried more than once to do unto

others as I have been done by. No father could have given me more affectionate counsel ; no friend could have been truer to a bond of mutual sympathy. With a keen sense of right and wrong, with swift and unerring judgment, with kindly heart and affectionate nature, beloved at home, universally respected abroad, a man of iron will with the sweet disposition of a woman, I shall always consider my lost friend as one of the noblest specimens of manhood I have ever met.

"In after years, when the history of this period of the drama of the nineteenth century is written, it cannot fail to be recorded what faithful encouragement and warm sympathy were bestowed on the sister arts of the drama and music by Mr. J. M. Levy. It was not only that he used his vast power and influence to do all that could be done to restore these arts—particularly that of the drama—to the niche from which they had fallen ; it was not only that he determined that everything should be said that could be said of the play and players of our day ; not only that his wish was to discover talent and foster it, to elevate the tone of the stage, to depose that which was vulgar and to advance that which was true ; but, when the truth comes to be told, it will be found that in almost all the successful dramatic enterprises of our day, be it opera or play, be it theatre or concert, there was in the background the diplomatic instinct and rare foresight of this very remarkable man.

"When in the long or immediate future more biographies and reminiscences are written, it will be found that the most successful artists and actors of our day always appealed to him in doubt, and never failed to receive the fruits of his unerring judgment and keen instinct. Many thousands have been saved, and many more have been won, when the individual who risked, and the man of

ambition who speculated, boasted the friendship, and accepted cheerfully the advice, of this remarkable man of the world. There are few artists of the front rank now living who would not testify cheerfully to the encouragement they have received, and personal regard they have encountered, at the hands of the true friend we all so sincerely mourn.

“It was by his desire that the somewhat scanty theatrical reports of other years, and other times, were turned into essays as complete as modern journalism can afford to give; it was by his wish that dramatic and musical art, in its daily story, should have a place as prominent in public regard as current politics or social incidents. The new play, or new opera, was to become as important as the political debate or the sensation of the hour.

“He gave the lead, and others followed it. And now, when we ask why the drama has such a prominent place in our regard, it must not be forgotten that the drama, in some form or other, is before men and women’s eyes, and a subject for discussion and public interest. The wonder is, that with such advantages for display, the goods in the window are not so very much better. The street has been thrown open, the shop-fronts are elaborate, the people are passing by and looking in; but the material is often very scanty, and the articles are not often very fresh. The advantages of publicity are often sadly ignored by the wholesale manufacturer, and the conscientious workman.

“Of the social qualities of our lost friend it would not be becoming to speak. We who knew him best, and in business, shall miss him in the little room in Fleet Street, where almost to the very last he was ready to offer us advice in anxiety, encouragement in

endeavour, and consolation in trouble. He invariably sunk the master in the friend, and made all connected with him believe that they were members of a happy family. His word was his bond, and a promise once given was never broken. Here in this room in the busy street, how many a time has he not given an encouraging hand to the youngster, and welcomed back the repentant prodigal !

"Others, who were not privileged to meet the faithful friend in the strict man of business, will recall his face and figure in other scenes, and amidst other associations. We shall see him no more in his box at the theatre, surrounded by his family, by whom he was so beloved, applauding and encouraging as in days of old ; but I for one, so long as playgoing is my lot, shall feel his presence there, and long for the chance of that one word that confirmed doubt, and supported conviction. To me it was ever a delight to know that 'the chief' was in the house, ready at any moment to aid with swift counsel or accurate forecast.

"Many there are still living who can recall delightful Sunday evenings in Doughty Street or Russell Square, where friendships were cemented that death alone had severed. Many of a younger generation will look back with delight at those memorable evenings in Lancaster Gate ; when all was happiness ; when sorrow had not set her black seal on this united family and its honoured head ; and when those privileged to be present enjoyed the society of the most cultured and delightful form of Bohemianism that chance could throw together. What brilliant conversation at the dinner table, what beautiful music in the drawing-room, contributed to by the genius of the day in every country, what cheery fun over the parting cigar, fell to the lot of those admitted to the

great house in Lancaster Gate, whose walls even yet must echo with laughter and with song!

“And then, as days went on, and death narrowed year by year that merry circle, and trouble more bitter than falls upon most good men and women stole down upon that patient household, the remnant of what was left gathered round in Grosvenor Street, and helped to cheer the closing days of this most faithful friend. It was on a bright cold day of a memorable October that I entered the little cottage in Kent, where I had often been with others as guests, and walked with him in the beauteous morning, among his flowers that he loved so well. A deep sorrow hung over the little patient household, for the life that was so dear to many was upstairs ebbing fast away.

“It was from this sick bed that he had sent me his last kindly message of encouragement on the last day that the paper he loved so well had been read to him. The day was fair, and the sun covered with light the flowers that were scattered on his grave, where we left him in peace. An honourable existence was followed by a beautiful death, and many present who knēw and loved him in life must have thought—

“‘God grant, when all is over, there’ll be one  
To kiss my memory, and breathe one prayer.’

“‘After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well.’”

## CHAPTER X

### “BOHEMIA IN DAYS OF OLD”

THE old Sadler's Wells days were so intimately associated with literary, artistic, and theatrical Bohemia as I once knew it, and where I made so many life-long friends, that a space may be made here for a brief account of some of the clubs, that sprang directly or indirectly from the small gathering of influential critics and their friends, under the shadow, as it were, of the old Islington playhouse, mostly members of the Re-Union Club.

At the Bedford Head in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, many of the Bohemians of E. L. Blanchard's day were afterwards to be met with as the status of the Wrekin diminished. Here a club was formed, denominated the "Bedford"; but it was broken up by the dissensions of certain members, the usual fate of most Bohemian literary clubs. The rival parties, however, after a time healed their differences, and started anew under the name of "The Re-Union."

It met so far back as 1850, and during its existence had many notable followers—men like Blanchard, Marston, Jonas Levy, Stirling Coyne, Leigh Murray and his brother Edward, who was for many years the acting manager at Covent Garden in the operatic days



of Harrison—the father of Clifford Harrison—and Louisa Pyne ; Carpenter the song writer, Lowe of “ The Critic,” Horace Mayhew, Julian Portch the artist, Cornelius Pearson, also an artist, Palser, Chard, Paul Bedford, George Augustus Sala (then quite a young man), Baylis, Horace Green, Deffett Francis, artist, Fred Kingsbury, Leicester Buckingham, Tom Robertson, Horsley, the solicitor, who illustrated the “ Seasons ” by facial expression, and was the butt of the members, and a host of kindred workers in art and letters.

Jonas Levy, the enthusiastic playgoer, newspaper proprietor, barrister, and Chairman of Companies for many years, was Hon. Secretary, and continued in that capacity until the club closed its doors finally. The members were only required to pay a nominal subscription of about five shillings a year, and met three nights a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, in an upstairs room at the Old Bedford hotel,—not in the present tavern.

Several members of the Re-Union resided in North London or on its confines—to wit : Jonas Levy (Gray’s Inn), Henry Marston (Baker Street, Lloyd Square), E. L. Blanchard (Wilmington Square), Hain Friswell (Holborn), and W. R. Belford (Pentonville). On the off nights of the Re-Union these worthies used to assemble occasionally at a little ale-house, the Shakespeare Head, at the corner of Myddelton Turning, Arlington Street, Clerkenwell, opposite Sadler’s Wells.

It was a smoke-pipe and tankard coterie, wherein the talk turned mainly on the drama, its life, prosperity, and success. They were ardent Shakespearean scholars to a man, loved the playhouse with enthusiasm, and were the legitimate forefathers of our Playgoers and First Night Gallery Clubs.

Friswell became exceedingly anxious that a club should be formed in North London for the convenience of its Re-Union members, and Henry Marston was deputed to beat about for a cosy and comfortable lodge. By an accident the actor strolled into the Old Jerusalem tavern, attached to that vestige of antique London, St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, and saw its host—genial, intelligent Benjamin Foster, an excellent antiquary, and no less excellent caterer—explaining his mission.

Foster, delighted at the project, said the best room in the old Clerkenwell Gatehouse, with its religious, humanitarian, literary, archæological and artistic records, could be placed at the disposal of Mr. Marston and his friends, free of charge, with every attention to their comfort. They were informed of this proposal, and on a November night, in 1856, Messrs. Hain Friswell, Jonas Levy, Stirling Coyne, and Henry Marston, having sent an invitation to some select spirits, met together and proposed that a club should be formed, inviting every gentleman present to become a member. It was agreed to; and in commemoration of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, formerly associated with the Gate, and of their night of the week to assemble, it was resolved to name the new coterie "The Friday Knights." E. L. Blanchard became one of its most enthusiastic members; and so did all whose duties on and off the stage took them to the neighbourhood of Sadler's Wells.

The name of the "Friday Knights Club" was in 1858 changed to the "Urban Club," and for the following reasons.

The room at the Clerkenwell Gate in which the clubbists assembled was no other than the chamber in which Edward Cave, the famous printer and publisher,

set up the type of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, edited it, and gathered about him, not only his contributors, Samuel Johnson, Richard Savage, and Goldsmith, but our Roscius, David Garrick. Cave, it will be remembered, signed himself in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, "Sylvanus Urban." So on the night of November 28th, 1858, Stirling Coyne, an Islingtonian, one of my first literary friends, once the dramatic critic of the *Sunday Times*, a prolific dramatist, and the Secretary of the Dramatic Authors' Society, rose amongst the Friday Knights, and proposed that they should abandon their original designation and call their Society the "Urban Club," a title not only fit, but felicitous, holding their gatherings in a room redolent of memories of the old editor and his historic staff of writers.

Coyne's proposition was greeted with acclamation, and the clubbists of to-day retain the name of their coterie with peculiar fondness. Two events in the Urban year are anticipated with great interest, their Shakespeare Commemoration—that of April 23rd, 1899, was the Forty-Second—and the Foundation Supper, as near November 28th as possible, each occasion being marked by the services of a member as chairman, who never fails to dilate on the associations of the club. Amongst the Shakespeare presidents have been H. Marston, Westland Marston, Tomlins, John Oxenford, J. A. Heraud, Henry Morley, Dr. Doran, Hepworth Dixon, Edmund Yates, G. A. Sala, James Albery, Dr. Richardson, R. H. Horne, Cordy Jeaffreson, Joseph Knight, W. E. Church, J. E. Carpenter, Thomas Woolner, R.A., and Barnett-Smith.

E. L. Blanchard presided at the Foundation Supper in 1863, and at the Shakespeare Dinner in 1867.

Among the hon. secs. of the club have been Hain Friswell, H. Thomas (teacher of Elocution in City of London College, where Irving had instruction from him), Carpenter the song-writer, Henry Marston, Daly Besemeres the playwright, Redding Ware, and W. E. Church. Members on the roll have included the names of Sir Crichton Browne, Thos. Woolner, R.A., Benjamin Richardson, Maddison Morton, Henry Graves, Thomas Catling, W. Maw Egley, Dr. Evan B. Jones, Dalgety Henderson, Barton Baker, R. Gowing, Rev. H. V. Le Bas, Rev. Astley Cooper, Arthur Lucas, Dr. Noble Smith, George Cockle, Jonas Levy (the last of the founders), and about fifty others. The pedigree of the club in reality goes back to the Mulberries. From the Gate the Urbans had to migrate in 1880, so they went to Ashley's Hotel in Covent Garden, and thence to Anderton's, at which Fleet Street hotel they have found a resort since 1882.

But long before the day of these Bohemian haunts, immortalised in the well-known scene in Tom Robertson's "Society," E. L. Blanchard, thanks to his wonderful memory, has preserved for us a valuable account of the Wrekin Club held at the Wrekin.

This was a tavern in Broad Court, Drury Lane, and its site is now occupied by a block of model lodging houses. Its host for some years was a Mr. Harrold, sometime a comedian, and an uncle of Blanchard's, who had an oil portrait of this relation. The Wrekin, from the early part of the century, had an interesting history, being the resort of wits and convivialists.

Here met the Mulberries, a club having a regulation that a paper or poem or conceit bearing upon Shakespeare should be contributed by each member. These contributions were called "Mulberry Leaves." Hither came Douglas Jerrold and his great friend Laman

Blanchard (in no way related to our Blanchard, whose name was Leman), and then E. W. Godwin, Kenny Meadows (the illustrator of Shakespeare), Elton the Shakespearian actor, E. Chatfield, and others. Jerrold's two essays, "Shakespeare in China" and "Shakespeare at Bankside," were originally "Mulberry Leaves," and will now be found reprinted in his "Cakes and Ale."

E. L. Blanchard stated that he never even saw Laman Blanchard, Jerrold's friend. But from the fact that his uncle was once proprietor, E. L. Blanchard necessarily took great interest in the hostelry, and was learnedly posted in its history. Warner, who married Mary Huddart (the Mrs. Warner, a handsome tragic actress of her day, under Macready at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and co-manager with Phelps at old Sadler's Wells), was host of the Wrekin some time, when a club called the Rationals, whose members included Stephen Price, Jerrold, Henry Mayhew, Baylis, Whitehead an artist, father of Mrs. Bernard Beere (Fanny Whitehead) and friend of W. M. Thackeray, Paul Bedford, Keeley, and Strickland, used to have a Saturday afternoon dinner.

Then Hemming, a Haymarket and Adelphi actor, became the host, and he died in 1849. E. L. Blanchard regularly attended the coffee-room of the tavern from 1837 to about 1846. During that period he formed the acquaintance of F. G. Tomlins (Jerrold's sub-editor), Howe, Strickland, Walter Lacy, Leman Rede, Mark Lemon, Donald King, Sheridan Knowles, Bayle Bernard, and a large number of other Thespians, authors, and painters, who used to frequent the house.

Under the head of "Licensed Victuallers, their Manners, and their Parlours," E. L. Blanchard wrote the following in *The Town*, April 20th, 1839 :—

*"The Wrekin, Broad Court.*

"In the very centre of Broad Court, and exactly half way between Bow Street on the one hand, and Drury Lane on the other, standeth that very 'ancient and honourable' hostelry, yclept the Wrekin, time out of mind the favourite resort of authors, actors, poets, painters, and penny-a-liners. Situated in the immediate vicinity of the theatres, it can excite little wonder that the members of the sock and buskin fraternity should have used this house in preference to others more distant; but a retrospective glance at the gradual progression it has made from a common ale-house to its present state will serve to show that the reputation of the Wrekin, from being a Thespian 'house of call,' has only been the work of that great architect Time.

"Tradition, we believe, assigns to this house the honour of having been the scene of many an adventure between that amorous monarch Charles II. and the fascinating orange-girl Nell Gwynne; whilst it was here also, no doubt, that Charles and his boon companions caroused 'potations pottle deep' till cockcrow, when his eccentric Majesty, following the example of his opulent landlord, deemed it expedient to retire.

"Somewhere about the middle of the eighteenth century we find the tavern in the hands of one Sims, a worthy Salopian, who, taking some dislike to its previous name, rechristened it after his native hill, the Wrekin, in Shropshire, and rendered it renowned for Tewkesbury ale and Shrewsbury cakes, at that time the favourite luncheon of the young men about town. Owing to the death of the ale-bibbing proprietor, it shortly afterwards became the property of Mr. Harrold, who, condensing three houses into one, and making several other improve-

ments, raised its estimation greatly ; and it was then opened for the sale of wine and spirits alone.

“Here it was that the ‘Catamarans,’ a club yet green in the memory of our old stagers, used to assemble, and hence it was that the brightest wit and the readiest pun used to emanate. The nightly conclave generally included the names of Theodore Hook, Tom Sheridan, his father (Richard Brinsley Sheridan), Charles Mathews, the two Kembles, Munden, Jack Morris (the song writer), George Colman Morton (‘Speed the Plough’), the dramatist, father of Maddison Morton, the farce writer ; Reynolds, Monk Lewis, and, in fact, all who had rendered themselves conspicuous in the world of literature, by either the wit in their productions, or otherwise renowned for their talents on the stage. Mr. Harrold resigned the proprietorship of the hotel to his son, having kept possession of it for above five-and-thirty years. It shortly afterwards again changed hands in favour of Mr. Judd, who sold the house for the Press, of which it continued to be the house of call for many years.

“Mr. Warner, before he married Miss Huddart, shared the duties of proprietor with a blithesome widow, bearing the unromantic name of Browne, who established an admirable society there under the quaint title of the ‘Rationals,’ to which most members of the companies of both Covent Garden and Drury Lane then belonged. It again experienced a number of vicissitudes in the different changes that had gradually taken place, when it ultimately fell into the possession of Mr. Hemming, once a distinguished member of the Haymarket corps.

“On turning immediately to the right, after penetrating through the folding doors, theatrically enveloped

in green baize, the visitor is inducted to a spacious parlour, which is occupied chiefly by persons connected with either the theatrical or the literary profession, and who may be seen befogging themselves with copious clouds of tobacco, alternately varying the amusement by quaffing deeply the contents of sundry pewter receptacles for half-and-half and stout, or imbibing the contents of a tumbler brimmed with a second edition of gin-and-water, whilst the drinker is discharging from his thirty-six inches of humanity (with true author-like perseverance in continuing the series of his productions) *volumes of smoke*. Having comfortably established the reader in a remote corner of the room, with a reasonable supply of liquids, and an adequate supply of stewed cheese, for which latter the place is especially renowned, we shall take the liberty of introducing him to the company at large, amongst whom he will no doubt recognise some old acquaintances.

“That strange unearthly-looking individual to the right with a head of hair resembling a retired shoe-brush, and a sort of oasis in the desert in the shape of an imperial on his chin, is Stirling Coyne, Yates’s dramatic factotum, who possesses a peculiar tact for measuring, with all the precision of the tailor’s craft, a dwarf or giant with an appropriate character. You think he’s engaged in the simple act of lighting his pipe yonder, do you? Pooh, nonsense! He has just received a note from the immortal Fred, enjoining him to write a piece for the introduction of some polar bears from Greenland, and he is just considering whether the dénouement can be brought to bear by one of the animals setting fire to, with a lighted brand in his mouth, the mutineers’ ship, in the last scene. By the



satisfactory whiff that follows the action, you may rest assured that the difficult task is accomplished.

"Next to him, with a dark, whisker-covered, and yet withal good-humoured countenance, is Henry Mayhew, the farce-writer, a most prolific vendor of puns and a clever scholar to boot. At his elbow sits his co-partner (?) in some of his laurels; and this said partner being never seen apart from his distinguished associate, many have come to the conclusion that the Siamese twins were not the only patentees of the indissoluble tie—although the author and his shadow, in this instance, are only similar in their movements, and not in their ideas. The latter individual has lately achieved an eclipse of one of his visual organs 'in an affray with some children;' this *ocular demonstration* should remind him that bail is not always so easily procured. May you remember this for the future, say we!

"Taking a further sweep on our dexter hand, we arrive at George Hodder, a parliamentary reporter on the *Morning Herald*. He is a gentlemanly young man enough, and, when not engaged in the 'House,' does the debating here with much vigour.

"That parson-looking personage, with a hat apparently striving to guillotine the wearer by meeting longways under his chin, is R—ds—on, the theatrical critic for *The Times*; 'a fellow of most infinite humour,' who, albeit being eminently sarcastic, never wounds with his satire in consequence of its keenness.

"A noisy collection of human beings in the next box announce at once our immediate vicinity to Messrs. A—l—n, Anderson, T—mk—ns, and a little elderly gentleman with white hair and spectacles, whose name for particular reasons we decline mentioning. The first

is a landscape painter and broad comic-song writer of no inconsiderable merit; the second has elevated his *os frontis* at least three inches since he essayed the character of the Prince of Denmark; and the third is the well-known scene-painter, late of the Adelphi and English Opera House, and now of none—the more's the Pitt-y! The little elderly gent seems to drink more than he eats, eat more than he thinks, and talk more than all put together; his tongue, in short, is a complete illustration of the perpetual motion.

“That pair of awful looking whiskers and moustachios, which appear at intervals through the smoke yonder, belong unto one Captain G——, whose visage, to our thinking, would be considerably improved by his undergoing a little experiment from the hands of a skilful tonsorial artist.

“Among others who meet here casually to enjoy a social glass are W—e (of the *Herald*), Egerton Wilks, Walter Lacy, Strickland, Hughes, Franks, O'Meara, the two B—ds (brothers), the latter connected with the Press; L—s, the ‘corpulent youth,’ and, in short, all who in any way value the comforts of a well-established tavern and good society.”

When E. L. Blanchard was but a boy of seventeen, and looking anywhere to earn an honest penny, circumstances almost compelled him to write for *The Town*, a scurrilous and infamous paper, with which, but for his necessities, he would not have been associated. He was able, however, to boast that he used his pen boldly in describing the scenes taking place at the “Copper Hall” in Cranbourne Alley, Leicester Square, where for fourpence any blackguard could spend hours playing hazard with “brown money.”

The suppression of this sink of iniquity was due to Blanchard's articles in *The Town*. His contributions to it were harmless enough ; they were theatrical reports and tavern sketches, one of which "The Wrekin," as will have been seen, embodies some curious and interesting accounts of its most celebrated *habitués*. It was the property of Renton Nicholson, better known in Bohemia of the past as the Lord Chief Baron Nicholson, who had a strange, chequered, and, it must be said, not too reputable career. He was born early in the century, in a then pretty suburban thoroughfare of East London, Hackney Road. But when a mere child he was brought to Islington, near which a couple of sisters opened what then fell under the name of "a young ladies' seminary." By this means they supported themselves with comfort and in respectability, and carefully looked after their little brother Renton, early deprived of parents—a serious deprivation—for the lad never had a firm moral hand laid on his early and wild proclivities.

When a boy at home with the hard-working, kindly sisters, he became a nightly visitor at old Sadler's Wells, hard by the sisters' home ; and, in after years, Nicholson used to tell capital stories of the famous clown, Joe Grimaldi, on and off the stage. At sixteen Nicholson became a pawnbroker's assistant in High Street, Shadwell, where he grew intimate with all the plebeian pugs, rooks, and sports of that essentially blackguard and unsavoury parish.

Amongst other companions he found a good friend in Jem Ward, originally a coalwhipper, but subsequently a great expert in the pugilistic art. When Nicholson's articles of apprenticeship ended, he migrated due west to a Kensington shop, kept by Wells, a successful

pawnbroker and silversmith. Other situations in the same capacity, about various quarters of London, brought Nicholson in contact with all the representatives of Bohemian and flash life—journalists, players, tavern vocalists, soiled doves, rooks of all shades, from the turf welsher, to the skittle sharp; Bow Street runners, magsmen, and bruisers—with which remarkable fraternity the help to “mine uncle” had a fast tie to the end of his days.

About 1830, Nicholson opened a jeweller's shop in Cranbourne Alley, on the site of what is known now as Sidney Place, Leicester Square, once renowned for what were satirically called “Cranbourne Alley Bonnets,” his chief customers being sixty-years-ago “mashers” and members of the demi-monde. All this soon ended in insolvency and the King's Bench. From that time to his death, in May, 1861, at the age of fifty-two, Nicholson was always in the hands of money-lending sweaters, “friendly” attorneys, and sheriff's officers.

Nicholson himself almost boasted, in the Gordon Hotel, under Covent Garden Piazza, that his practical knowledge of London bagnios and debtors' “stone jugs” was not to be matched by any “flash cove,” living or dead. Let it be said that Nicholson, who got hold of plenty of money, always paid pounds for the shillings he might, for the time being, have in his possession. He was literally the Robin Hood of a very disreputable Bohemia; barefacedly a freebooter among the aristocratic pigeons, but literally a Good Samaritan to the impecunious and fallen of both sexes.

Association with him led one to arrive at the conclusion that he might have been a splendid fellow but for striking his flag to a sense of duty, and simply going on the down-grade of inclination—that mode of

conduct that may be called the "I-shall-do-as-I-like" method. Nicholson became notorious, after keeping "brown money" gambling houses, cigar shops, betting resorts, and bagnios, by projecting a weekly publication called *The Town*.

It ante-dated our society journals, but chiefly dealt with the phenomena of flash life. The first number appeared on Saturday, 3rd June, 1837; Last, the printer, finding capital; Archibald Henning, who drew the first *Punch* cartoon, furnishing the pictures, when Nicholson sat in the editor's chair. The paper was published by a Mr. Forrester—not to be confounded with the artist who playfully called himself "Alfred Crowquill"—at 310, Strand. Amongst the writers were Dalrymple (burlesque author), a clever Bohemian; Henry Pellott, once clerk and solicitor of the Ironmongers' Company; J. G. Canning ("Theophilus Pole"); Dr. Maginn, scholar, wit, and free liver; and Hemming, of old Adelphi memory. Nicholson subsequently attained immense notoriety as Chief Baron of the Judge and Jury at the Garrick's Head, Bow Street, and the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane, next to the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre, now a Jewish Synagogue, and the Coal Hole Tavern, whose site is occupied by a part of Terry's Theatre.

I have myself witnessed one of these disgusting trials at the Cider Cellars, with Nicholson as Judge and a celebrated character called Brookes, known as the "Protean witness," in the box. Nicholson used to have a refreshment booth on all the big racecourses, and for a time was proprietor of Cremorne Gardens. He may be described as a plebeian Falstaff turned tapster; humorous, handsome, obese, sensual, impudent; a rooker of the rich and the soul of good nature to the poor.

Journalism, however, was poorly paid for, and Blanchard submitted this fact on a certain occasion to the late Joseph Last, of Crane Court. "I don't dispute it, Sir. You send me a great deal of copy for fifteen shillings a week. *It's small pay, but so regular.*" The remark came on Blanchard like a revelation. He bowed, and left Last's office.

Sauntering one summer day on the pavement before the Edinburgh Castle, in the Strand (a favourite resort—witness Blanchard's genial poem to "John," the friendly waiter there years ago), a year or two later on, the journalist met a small printer and publisher of Holywell Street, a Mr. Olinthus Bostock. "Good-day, Mr. Blanchard!" The salutation was returned; and after some conversation the publisher said, "I often wonder you waste so much time on newspapers and sporting prints. Why don't you try a novel, Sir—something cutting and moral?" As Bostock averred that by writing a work of this description its author's fortune would be made, Blanchard spent some days in Holywell Street, devising a story, at once thrilling and didactic, on the career of George Barnwell, the London apprentice.

On a certain Saturday Bostock entered the room in which the author was hard at work, and, with a rueful expression of countenance, said, "I'm going to take a great liberty, but could you lend me a little money? I only want a pound. My paper-merchant wants something on account, and until I pay a trifle he won't send me the ghost of a quire." The historian of Barnwell's perfidious doings informed Mr. Bostock that he was "stumped." "Have mercy on me, Mr. Blanchard! You don't know the straits of mercantile men. You're at work in your shirt-sleeves, let me have

your coat and waistcoat to raise a few shillings on them. Sparks will soon close his warehouse, and if I don't work to-morrow we can't get the novel out next week, and I have no paper at all. Your things can be taken out a little after six, as my boy Ezekiel is going to bring home some money." The author took off his waistcoat, and then Bostock hastily remarked, "I am ashamed to make such a request, as you are so kind and affable; but could I beg your boots, too? With an illustrated Bible upstairs and your things I can easily get the sovereign." "Have you a pair of slippers?" "No; but there's an old rug in the next room. Can't you rest your feet on that? I'll have everything out at the time I've named." "Well, don't spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar," laughingly exclaimed the author. "Mind, boots, waistcoat, and coat by quarter past six, as I have to get up to the 'Yorkshire Stingo' to hear Bob Glindon and Kitty Tunstall sing."

Bostock went away, and some time elapsed before he again appeared. His demeanour was miserable in the extreme on re-entering the room. "Been a long time, Mr. Bostock! How have you got on?" "Awful, Sir! Everything seems to go wrong. Sparks took the sovereign which I raised, but won't send any paper. Ezekiel has been disappointed, and I'm without a shilling. Is there anybody you know that would advance a trifle? I'll go with pleasure, I want a trifle so bad."

"Mr. Bostock, let us have no trifling. Go and get some money, and let me have my clothes." "I could if I had five shillings. Things are awful to contemplate. If Sparks had sent the paper some of it might have gone for work. There's a man would lend me half-a-sovereign if I paid him back a crown I'm in his debt. He lives in Newcastle Street. As a last resource, Mr.

Blanchard, will you let me have your trousers for an hour? Not longer. A crown will set me free till Ezekiel comes back from Cripplegate, where he's gone for five pounds. Let me have the trousers for an hour!"

"Do you think that I'm going to be played with any longer? My difficulties have always been great, but I'm not going to fight this ridiculous situation in a state of semi-nudity. Go out and get relief somehow."

The hours rolled on, but no Bostock appeared, and the end of the matter was that Blanchard had to pass the hot night in the printer's stuffy little office. On Sunday, at noon, he sent up a note to a friend, Robert Cruickshank, who lodged in Lyon's Inn; but that worthy having been at a friendly gathering other than a temperance one the night before, he did not reach Blanchard until the evening was far advanced. He, after an explanation, went back to the Inn, obtained a watchman's thick great coat, and a pair of huge carpet-slippers belonging to a laundress, and, arrayed in these articles of dress, when night enveloped the great city, Blanchard walked to and fro with Cruickshank on Adelphi Terrace, inhaling the fresh air from the river. After this jaunt, they adjourned to the White Hart, Catherine Street, and supped, Blanchard sleeping there for the night.

The story of the famous Savage Club and its many wanderings, the club that has outlived all the others and of which I was once a member, has been excellently told elsewhere, and by those who have had access to the records of this Bohemian institution, which was as well known in the Bohemia of the past, as it is to-day. The tale of the departure of Arthur Sketchley, a very devout



Catholic, myself, and several other members of our faith, was so strange, and a theological controversy so unusual with the liberal Savages, that contained members of every creed under Heaven, that an allusion may be made to it.

Artemus Ward (Charles Browne), a delightful American humourist and lecturer and a most charming companion, arrived in Bohemia land with the fatal word consumption written on his face. He first appeared at the Egyptian Hall in his entertainment "Among the Mormons," on November 13, 1866. He died at Southampton, aged 33. He was born at Waterford in America in 1836, was a printer by trade, and travelled throughout New England until he settled down in Boston, and eventually became a writer. His forte consisted in comic stories and essays. He afterwards turned his attention to lecturing, and from the quaintness of his delivery and his impassive countenance, he became a great favourite, and earned considerable sums of money. He lectured in all sorts of extraordinary places, and before some very strange audiences, amongst wild tribes and miners; Mr. E. P. Hingston, his agent, once connected with the firm of Spiers and Pond and subsequently a journalist, and theatrical manager, having piloted him safely.

He was once captured by Indians, and in crossing the Rocky Mountains he and his agent were attacked by wolves. After travelling in America, from about 1863, he returned to New York in 1864. He came to London in 1866, wrote for *Punch*, and then lectured in the Egyptian Hall. He will always be remembered at least by one work, "Artemus Ward, his book." T. W. Robertson was a great friend of his, and with E. P. Hingston was appointed his executor. After providing for his mother,



LYDIA FOOTE.  
("Ticket of Leave Man.")



MRS. SCOTT SIDLONS.



MISS BURTON.



LYDIA THOMPSON.  
("Middy Ashore.")



MARIE WILTON.  
("Myles-na-Coppaleen.")



he left a considerable number of legacies to children, and at his mother's death her legacy was to be devoted to the foundation of an asylum for aged and incapacitated printers.

It was the death of poor Artemus, the dear friend of all of us, that raised the theological ire of the Savages. When death was almost staring him in the face, he had asked Arthur Sketchley, to whom he was deeply attached, if he could send him a priest. It was natural that he should do so, as his mother was a Catholic and as, we all understood, he had been baptised in this faith. So Sketchley took steps to carry out his friend's instructions. But other Savage Club friends of Artemus maintained that he was not a Catholic, and never had been one, and accused some of us of an unfair method of proselytising, which was certainly not the case. Anyhow, we were severely reprimanded, and, unwilling to accept the snub, politely took our departure, with, at least on my part, considerable regret.

But the club with which I was most intimately connected was the Arundel Club, in Salisbury Street, Strand, where I have spent some of the happiest days—and I fear nights also—of my life.

"Bohemia! A desert country near the sea!" So Shakespeare called it in a stage direction. This is how a dear old friend of mine, William Jeffrey Prowse, a genius in his way, whom the "gods" must have loved much, because he died very young indeed, described the Bohemia as he, and we, knew it at the time that we buckled on our literary armour in the famous but despised early sixties:—

"How we laughed as we laboured together!

How well I remember to-day

Our 'outings' in midsummer weather,

Our winter delights at the play!

We were not over-nice in our dinners,  
Our 'rooms' were up rickety stairs ;  
But if hope be the wealth of beginners,  
By Jove ! we were all millionaires.  
Our incomes were very uncertain,  
Our prospects were equally vague ;  
Yet the person I pity, who knows not the City,  
The Beautiful City of Prague !

“ If at times the horizon was frowning,  
Or the ocean of life looking grim,  
Who dreamed, do you fancy, of drowning ?  
Not we, for we knew we could swim.  
Oh ! friends, by whose side I was breasting  
The billows that rolled to the shore,  
Ye are quietly, quietly resting,  
To laugh and to labour no more.  
Still, in accents a little uncertain,  
And tones that are possibly vague,  
The person I pity, who knows not the City,  
The Beautiful City of Prague ! ”

It is well that these pretty verses by Jeff Prowse, the author of that exquisite poem “ My Lost Old Age, by a Young Invalid,” should introduce Bohemia as I knew it when I first put pen to paper to try to earn a living forty years ago. For poor old Jeff was a typical Bohemian of the better, cleaner sort when he was writing leaders, sometimes two a day, for the *Daily Telegraph*, contributing charming verses and his famous “Nicholas” Sporting Notes to *Fun*, when it was edited by young Tom Hood, the only son of the poet ; watching cricket matches, the great passion of his life ; or strolling with Hood, Paul Gray, the young artist, and several others, including your humble servant, in Knole Park at Sevenoaks, or exploring the Dickens country round Gravesend, Cobham, and Rochester. Prowse was a very popular member of the Arundel Club, as indeed he was everywhere ; and it brought sorrow to our little set when we heard that he had died of consumption at

Cimiez, near Nice, where he was buried, not having attained his thirtieth year.

“ I’m only nine-and-twenty yet,  
Though young experience makes us sage ;  
So how on earth can I forget  
The memory of my lost old age ? ”

The last leader Prowse wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* was on the death of Tom Lockyer, the then famous Surrey wicket-keeper ; and it may be interesting to quote here a letter I received some years ago, describing how our old friend got on to the lowest rung of the ladder of fame. It may be interesting to many of those youngsters who so continually write to ask me “ How to become a journalist.”

“ 10 ROCHESTER GARDENS, WEST BRIGHTON,  
“ 13th June, 1895.

“ DEAR CLEMENT SCOTT,—I cannot help writing to thank you for your kind memory of our poor friend Jeff Prowse in this day’s *Telegraph*. If he had been alive, no doubt he would have given us some stirring verses of prowess of W. G. Grace, for he was ever a lover of our national sports. I shall never forget his coming to me, at that time somewhere in the sixties, to ask me if I could take him to see the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, as I happened to be captain of a four-oared boat. We intended to row up from Greenwich, and although he was a dead weight in the boat, the crew were only too pleased to have him with us ; for in those early days, while yet unknown to fame, he was universally liked. Need I say he kept us all amused with his jests and wit, and after seeing the race we put him out at Putney. He told us afterwards that he went to a small inn, and sat down and wrote an account of the race, took it to Fleet Street and

dropped it in the Editor's box of the *Daily Telegraph*. He came and told me the next day that, to his surprise, they had printed it verbatim. This proved to be the turning point of his career, for soon after they offered him a post on their staff; and so commenced his journalistic career which continued up to his early death. He was universally loved by all who knew him for his genial and happy disposition and the genius he undoubtedly had. It speaks for itself when such men as yourself cannot help but recalling him to the memory of those who knew and loved him, and cannot forget his great talents and ability. Cut off in his early prime, his memory will ever remain green with,

“Yours very sincerely,

“J. TATTON GROVES.”

It was in the year 1862, a year after the Arundel Club was moved from its old home in Arundel Street, Strand, to the end house of the left-hand side of Salisbury Street, Strand, overlooking the river, picturesque with old wharves and broken-up bits, with old-world taverns, barges and landing stages, that delighted such etchers as Whistler and Seymour Haden, then destitute of course of an Embankment, that I became a member of that famous institution, at the request of my fellow-clerks in the War Office, Pall Mall, Tom Hood and G. F. Rolph, both Bohemians and the best of good fellows.

Tom Hood, the handsome editor of *Fun*, has slept for many years in Nunhead Cemetery: but Rolph, the Bohemian and wanderer to the last, roams about to this day in the south of France—the France that he loved as a boy when he took me over periodically to

Boulogne, and taught me the comfort of an old-fashioned French inn as contrasted with a swagger hotel.

I was no stranger to many at the Arundel when I was elected, and found myself at once at home in the fine old river-side mansion, for such it was, probably the house of some rich city merchant in the days of David Garrick, whose memory lingers yet around Southampton Street, Strand and Adelphi Terrace. In 1862, the club possessed two large and spacious rooms: on the ground floor a billiard-room and dining-room combined; on the first floor a magnificent sitting and general room, also combined, where the members of the Arundel smoked all day and supped as well as smoked all night, for daylight never dawned over the picturesque Thames, with its wharves, barges, towers, and bridges, without finding one, if not two, members of the Arundel still sitting, still smoking, still discussing every imaginable subject dear to the earnest, the acquisitive, and the quick-brained young man.

Believe me, it was not all "shop" that was discussed at the old Arundel. We had as many barristers, solicitors, artists, men of science, and musicians as actors and dramatists; and in those days the stage had not been raised to that level of importance which justified "stage shop" in excluding the "shop" of other learned professions.

In 1862, the mere actors had to take a back seat at the Arundel Club, and to "lie low," whilst men like Charles Russell, now Lord Chief Justice of England, and the brothers Joyce, Sam and William, told us stories of Baron Martin and Cockburn and Shee and Bovill and other distinguished Judges; whilst the solicitors cut in, headed by Anderson Rose and Horace Brandon; when pictorial art was discussed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti,



Frederick Sandys, and the accomplished art critic, D. W. Deane ; when Oxford University and Alpine climbing were the hobbies of Adams-Reilly, and C. J. Stone, fellow-students of Brasenose ; and when Matthew Forster, a pedantic barrister, well informed and very rich, walked about the room with a long clay pipe in his mouth, discussing, accurately and well, every subject under heaven, and laying down the law, dictatorially and arrogantly, like a schoolmaster to his form, or a Judge to a jury, earning for himself the undisguised hatred of all the light literary skirmishers, who did not care to be "sat upon" so persistently or made to feel their ignorance in the presence of a perambulating encyclopædia.

I have never mixed in any society where conversation was so general or so good. It was an education in itself for a young man with a retentive memory and possessing the art of a "good listener." I shrewdly suspect one William Shakespeare was a good listener during his London career. He profited by the experience and conversational powers of brilliant men. Think of the knowledge imbibed by literary men of the past from listening to Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith and their contemporaries !

Universal "shop," the "shop" of mixed brains and experiences, is invaluable ; but the shop of a trade, one great, aggressive, self-advertising trade, is to me often wearisome. There are other worlds, other arts, other influences, other impressions outside the walls of a theatre. We can have too much even of the play and the self-imposed grievances of players, who, many of them, seem to think that the world at large and clubs in general, were made for them in order to have a monopoly of personal anecdote. It was not so, thank

goodness, in 1862. The Arundel Club, at any rate, was a "universal provider" of the best of all good things—knowledge.

I am able to print a list of the members of the Arundel Club in the year 1863.

*List of Committee and Members of the Arundel Club,  
1863.*

Committee : J. V. Bridgeman, Henry J. Byron, Charles James Coleman, D. W. Deane, James T. Foard, Horace Green, A. S. Hart, Samuel Joyce, Frederick Lawrence, Jonas Levy, W. H. Maitland, George A. Sala, J. Palgrave Simpson, Frederick G. Tomlins, J. Crawford Wilson.

Hon. Treasurer : Burton S. Blyth.

Hon. Auditors : Edward Murray, William Joyce.

Hon. Secretary : Herbert Fry.

Members : W. A. Crofton Atkins, A. H. Bailey, W. Barnard, Thomas Jack Baty, W. R. Belford, John Best, John Billington, E. L. Blanchard, Sidney Laman Blanchard, Burton S. Blyth, John Boosey, Charles Boydell, William Boys, Horatio Brandon, John V. Bridgeman, John Britten, Leicester Buckingham, John Burridge, Joseph Burgin, F. C. Burnand, Henry J. Byron, Edward Cadogan, Edwin Canton, James Henry Chute, Campbell Clarke, John Clarke, Charles James Coleman, Edward Copping, C. W. Cotton, J. Stirling Coyne, A. E. Crafter, J. C. Dalton, D. W. Deane, Charles Dickens, Jun., Edward Dicey, Conrad C. Dumas, J. Farrell, W. Fielding, James T. Foard, Matthew J. Forster, Herbert Fry, W. H. Garrett, Rudolph G. Glover, Horace Green, Edward L. Griffin, J. O. Griffiths, Marshall Hall, Andrew Halliday, Charles Harding, Anthony J. Harris, A. Hart, Ernest Hart, Charles E. Hawkins,

William Hazlitt, Edward N. Hogarth, Jennings Holgate, Tom Hood, Charles Horsley, Henry Howes, J. H. Jackson, Edward Johnson, H. E. Jones, Samuel Joyce, William Joyce, Hilton Keith, Frederick Kingsbury, G. N. R. Lambert, W. H. Langley, B. W. Lara, Frederick Lawrance, Edward Lee, H. Leslie, Albert Levy, C. S. Lidderdale, George B. Lister, Eyre Lloyd, W. H. Maitland, Walker Marshall, H. Victor Martin, Horace Mayhew, G. F. Montgomery, Edward Murray, James Newlands, J. F. Nokes, Morgan J. O'Connell, J. Parselle, Edward Peacock, Charles Perring, Edwin Pettitt, Julian J. Portch, W. J. Prowse, W. Winwood Reade, W. H. Reece, W. Riston, Alfred B. Richards, Thomas T. Robertson, G. H. Rolph, George Rose, J. A. Rose, George Augustus Sala, A. C. Saunders, H. Carl Schiller, Clement Scott, R. F. Shattock, F. J. K. Shenton, A. N. Sherson, J. Palgrave Simpson, Bassett Smith, E. A. Sothern, Thomas Spencer, F. E. R. Stainforth, W. B. B. Stevens, Charles R. Stewart, Barry Sullivan, Thomas Noon Talfourd, C. W. Tayleur, F. G. Tomlins, J. L. Toole, J. Towers, Josiah Towne, Lyndhurst B. B. Towne, Hermann Vezin, F. Wallerstein, Theodore Walsh, R. Walton, Harry L. Ward, Harrison Weir, J. H. Welsh, Washington Wilks, J. Crawford Wilson, William Wilson, F. Wood, W. S. Woodin, Charles E. Wright.

But I must get back now to those exquisite day dawns on the river, the summer daybreak in the streets, those first pure bursts of light that found the grand old room of the Arundel still occupied.

I have known in my career several champion sitters-up. In fact I have, in my time at least, qualified for the post. But I should place at the head of the

list Leicester Buckingham, journalist, dramatist, and dramatic critic; William Belford, the actor who started with Phelps at Sadler's Wells and migrated to the Strand Theatre in the days of the Swanboroughs and Marie Wilton; Deane, the art student; Hcrace Green, the philanthropist; E. L. Blanchard, my good friend, and predecessor as dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*; but, out-and-out champion of all, Joseph Knight, who, still hale, hearty, and brimful of intelligence as ever, is sitting up as late now as he did forty odd years ago. He was once and deservedly called "Good Knight," but he has sat on and on, and talked and talked, and he has seen us all to bed. I for one candidly own that I have given in.

In the old days at the Arundel it was a club rule that the 'last in the house was to put out the gas and close the street door. No steward or servant in the world could endure such hours. Dear old Joe Knight must have a record of lamp extinguishing and door shutting. He beat Belford and Buckingham at their own game.

If any witnesses are required to confirm my evidence, I should call into the box my old Arundel friend, T. H. S. Escott, the essayist, and W. R. McConnell, the learned Judge at Sessions, who know the Arundel story by heart, or, if they failed me, James T. Foard, the Manchester barrister, who was the proprietor, or rather the landlord, of the old river-side house when I became a member in 1862.

I could fill many a chapter with stories of the eccentricity, wit and humour for which original members of the Arundel were famous. Here Leicester Buckingham, the dramatic critic of the then *Morning Star*, and adapter of French plays, who affected an Ary Scheffer pointed beard and long ringlety hair almost to his

shoulders, reminding one of an Italian organ grinder, sparred continuously with Tom Robertson, the then struggling and unsuccessful dramatist, whose ill-fortune in life at that time almost soured and embittered an otherwise genial nature. Luck was steadily against him at first; but it changed, as it often does, and carried our old friend to the top of the tree.

Robertson loved well and hated well, and nothing delighted him more than to "get a rise" out of Buckingham, who started life as a lecturer at the Panopticon, a curious medley entertainment-house, originally built on the site of the Alhambra Theatre, and distinguished for a coloured fountain and an organ built by Willis. Here at the Arundel in those days we first heard the mordant, trenchant wit of W. S. Gilbert, that contrasted strangely with the ready, brilliant humour of Henry James Byron and the quick, genial, sparkling funniments of Frank Burnand.

Here Charles Coleman, barrister, good fellow, and legal reporter for *The Times*, "set the table in a roar." Here James Anderson Rose, an art-loving solicitor, who covered the club's walls with beautiful and priceless pictures, discussed art with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Frederick Sandys, Jemmy Whistler, and D. W. Deane. Here Spēncer was learned on science and chemistry. Here W. R. McConnell, now a Judge, and Charles Russell, the biggest of Judges now in the land, with James T. Foard, upheld the honours of the Northern Circuit. And here, as I said before, Matthew Forster, with the long clay pipe and dictatorial method, preached incessantly what he never practised.

But there are few old members of the Arundel Club who will ever forget the eccentric vagaries of one Horsley, who with Jonas Levy—the owner of Kingsgate

Castle, on the Cliff between Margate and Broadstairs, and no relation to Mr. J. M. Levy of the *Daily Telegraph*, as so many people imagined—was a director of the Crystal Palace, and a very worthy solicitor into the bargain.

Horsley was an old bald-headed man, with a mild and beneficent countenance, and was about the vainest creature I ever met, and that is saying a good deal, considering the life in which I have lived. This venerable solicitor was amenable to the grossest form of flattery. It only required H. J. Byron or Sothern, or Edward Murray, the witty brother of Leigh and Gaston Murray, to pooh-pooh and ridicule Horsley in order to make the old gentleman a ludicrous and pitiable laughing stock.

He prided himself on his "suggestion of the seasons of the year," by facial expression—the dawn of spring, when he looked like an inspired idiot; the glow of summer, with a beaming grin; the decay of autumn, with spasmodic shivers; and the cold of winter, with a kind of paralysed countenance and an obtruding tongue. When old Horsley was fooled to the top of his bent, and was told he could not do, what he said he could do, by the sarcastic Byron, he would give us the monkey in a thunderstorm! Conceive a venerable solicitor standing up and making an abject idiot of himself in such brilliant society!

But his great feat at the Arundel was to imitate the hippopotamus at the Zoo bathing in a tank. We put the two huge Arundel Club sofas together. That was supposed to be the tank. Into this the old gentleman plunged, and then his idiotic antics were quite indescribable. I never shall forget the face of old Benjamin Webster, the actor, one night when they "drew" Horsley, as

they called it. The most hideous of all the experiments was when the taunted Horsley was goaded on by Ned Murray, who pretended to be Eve, in the corner of the room, whilst Horsley grovelled on his stomach across the dirty floor in the character of the Serpent tempting Eve.

Some of the most entertaining hours I ever spent at the Arundel were at the house dinners in the winter, so regulated as to allow us to attend to our theatrical duties in the evening. At the table the conversation was as general as it was admirable, and in those days it was certainly not the fashion to belong to a club in order to abuse one's neighbours and fellow-members. We had barge parties on the Thames below bridge and walking tours in the summer time, with either Worth or Blanchard for our leader; whilst every winter we explored the theatres and old haunts "down east," and studied\* old and new London under wise guides and counsellors. As a change from the Arundel, we were apt to foregather at the Edinburgh Castle, or Simpson's, in the Strand; and on these occasions our popular "Rambler" of the *Sunday Times*, J. Ashby Sterry, was always present and mentally taking notes.

I have luckily come across an interesting letter addressed to J. L. Toole from Charley Coleman, now a stipendiary magistrate in the North of England, at Middlesboro', which lets new light into the merriment of old Arundel days.

"I have just been reading John Hollingshead's reminiscences in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, and very amusing it all is. I am glad to find that he joins in my opinion about Sothern, a very nice fellow. Do you remember being at a *séance* in Queen Anne Street when the brothers Davenport and Fay had a grand

show up? A Dr. Ferguson was the showman. You sat next to me, on my right; and Sothern was on my left, on a second row of seats. There was a poor devil on my left whose heart was beating about two hundred to the minute; he was in a deplorable state of funk. After the light had been blown out, Ferguson, in his sepulchral voice, asked, 'Is there any gentleman here desirous of being touched by a spirit?' I really don't know why I did it, for it was a beastly cruel thing to do, but I passed my left hand down the face of the poor heart-beating brute. He yelled out, 'Good Lord!' and fell out of his chair. Lights were brought in, and the chap was picked up. You said to me, 'What a fool you were to touch that man, as I had tied the tail of his coat to Sothern's coat, and if Sothern moved he would have thought that he had been seized by a spirit and got into a mortal fright.'

"My work on *The Times* caused me to leave the club. Sometime afterwards I was asked to rejoin it, and I was put up with Meyer Lutz; fifty-seven men voted, and there was not a single black ball. Ben Webster used to be greatly amused at the vagaries and infernal stupidity of Horsley, and looked upon him as the greatest ape bearing human form to be found in the world; for old Ben used to visit me at Lancaster Place, and always made it a *sine qua non* that he should not leave till six o'clock A.M. Considering that I had to be at Court at ten, I found his visits rather trying.

"He was a charming companion, and was not ashamed to talk of his early life—he told me that in his early days he lived in a second-floor back in Clare Market, and danced at Drury Lane—he was proud of his figure and good looks. Now I see that it is sought to make him out a descendant of an old family who gave shelter to Adam and Eve when they were expelled from Paradise.



“The old Arundel has much to be proud of; and I question very much whether the Savage Club can boast of such well-known names as figure in the original books of members of the Arundel. The reading of the celebrated names will, I have no doubt, conjure up in your mind pleasant recollections.”

The following note in the life of E. L. Blanchard, written by my old friend James Foard, who virtually founded the Arundel Club, and was certainly our landlord, will also be found very interesting.

“In the account of the Savage Club, October, 1857, Lionel Brough gives it as his idea that the Arundel Club was an outcome of the Savage, and that it was founded by H. J. Byron, W. P. Hall, and Leicester Buckingham, in consequence of a little disagreement with the ‘Savages.’ Mr. J. T. Foard’s account scarcely tallies with this, and, as one of the original members of it, is probably the more correct. He states: The Arundel Club was originated by some of the members of the old Re-Union (identified with ‘The Owl’s Roost’ in T. W. Robertson’s ‘Society’). The original members, so far as I recollect, were F. G. Tomlins, the Shakespearean critic and author of a small book on the English stage, and one of the council of the Camden Society; Frank Talfourd, Blanchard, Hollingshead, who seceded, however, at the first meeting or very soon after; Crawford Wilson, myself, and two or three others, among those being H. J. Byron, who joined us in a few months, and Tom Robertson, introduced by Byron, about or within a year after, if my memory serves me.

“The premises we first took were at the bottom of Arundel Street, Strand—hence the name of the Club—on the site of the present Arundel Hotel, and we occupied two or three rooms. Leicester Buckingham

and Belford the actor, were amongst the members during the year 1859-60. Crawford Wilson, Byron, Horace Green, D. W. Deane, Robertson, Belford, and Leicester Buckingham were among the regular attenders at the club during the first year.

"The Arundel Club removed to 12 Salisbury Street, Strand, in June, 1861, and remained there till the month of September, 1888, when the excellent premises in which it is now located, on Adelphi Terrace, Strand, were occupied. The Salisbury Street house (now pulled down) was celebrated for its large upstairs room, in which the members met, and in which, perhaps, more thoroughly jovial suppers were eaten than in any other club in London. The ceiling was a particularly handsome one, and the old copper kettle for hot grog, a standing institution. The Arundel was, and remained, a thoroughly Bohemian club.'"

These were the companions and good fellows of the early sixties. The number of these has been sadly reduced in the course of thirty years; but I do not believe that there is one of us still living who has not some happy memory of one of the first and the best of the old Bohemian clubs--the Arundel.

I have accidentally alluded to the "old Arundel" in the departed days of Salisbury Street, as first and foremost a conversational club. Men of varied tastes, habits, and professions met together, and poured out for our benefit the rich wine of their knowledge and experiences.

In fact, it was an education in itself to belong to such an institution. I cannot help thinking that, in one important respect, the Bohemian and theatrical clubs of to-day might well take a leaf out of the well-bound book of the Arundel.

In the strict sense of the word, Evans's Supper

Rooms, under the Piazza in Covent Garden, close to the famous Tavistock, Bedford, and Hummums Hotels, the resort of playgoing bachelors, kindly uncles and country cousins, could scarcely be called a club; and yet, in reality, at one time Evans's was one of the jolliest conversational clubs in all London.

In the early forties, the words, "Evans's Late Joys," were inscribed over the lamp that lighted you down a steep stone staircase from the pavement of the Piazza, to the cosy supper room below. Once within the room itself, no cosier scene could possibly be imagined. A splendid coal and coke fire blazed and crackled in the old-fashioned grate; the walls were covered with fine old theatrical portraits and pictures; little round tables and comfortable chairs were dotted about, and I suppose such chops, steaks, kidneys, and huge mealy roasted potatoes in their jackets, washed down with tankards of ale, stout, or half and half of the best, were never before or after enjoyed by mortal man.

In no club room was I ever warmer, or felt more comfortable, after the play on a winter's night, than by the bright fireside in the picture room at Evans's. Conversation of the best, a capital wholesome supper, no scandal, and much good fellowship! Who would desire anything better? It is not always so in modern clubland.

Here might have been found, evening after evening, such celebrities as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, the brothers Mayhew, George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, Archdeekne, Johnny Deane, Landseer, Frank Matthews, Bob Keeley, and all the choicest spirits of the Garrick when its home was in King Street, Covent Garden; whilst, in later years, I have frequently chummed up with Lord Henry Lennox, Serjeants Ballantine and Parry,

Montagu Williams, Lionel Lawson—one of the original proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, and a great and generous patron of the drama to the day of his death.

The allusion to Andrew Archedeckne of the Garrick Club reminds me that Thackeray reproduced him, line for line, manner for manner, as Foker, in his novel, "The History of Pendennis." So you see that, although Thackeray objected to the description of himself as given by Edmund Yates, a fellow member of the Garrick, he was not superior to doing exactly the same kind of thing himself.

In fact, he was the means of the expulsion of Yates from the Garrick, though Charles Dickens warmly espoused the cause of the young journalist. In this case history has often repeated itself. What is sauce for the goose is not always sauce for the gander.

Archedeckne married the beautiful Miss Elsworthy, who played the Queen to Fechter's Hamlet, and no one has ever looked the part so well or played it better.

For all these "clients" special seats were allotted; and in the days when there were no closing hours, and you could sit up chatting and smoking until three or four o'clock in the morning, a visit to Evans's and a delightful supper always concluded a night at the play. It was the regular haunt of the very best men about town, and far more popular with them than the dancing and singing saloons where the opposite sex was admitted.

It has for many a long year been a disputed point whether it was the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane, or the Coal Hole in the Strand, or Evans's Supper Rooms in Covent Garden, which was the scene of the "Cave of Harmony" described by Thackeray in "The New-comers," when the old "Codd" Colonel marched out accompanied by Clive Newcome, to show his disgust at the questionable songs sung at these Bohemian retreats

in the days of long ago. It is certain, anyhow, that such songs might have been heard at Evans's in its salad days; and, doubtless, Ross gave "Sam Hall" with great gusto at both places of amusement. The strange part of it is how the devout Paddy Green could have countenanced them, whether as servant or master.

As to the identity of Thackeray's "Cave of Harmony," I think that Edmund Yates has settled that point beyond all question. He says:

"'Sam Hall' was sung by Ross at the Cider Cellars, not at Evans's. With Thackeray the 'Cave of Harmony' stood for Evans's, and in the first chapter of 'The Newcomes' for the 'Coal Hole'; the Back Kitchen was the Cider Cellars. Paddy Green was at one time in the chorus of the Adelphi in my father's management."

I have never heard the famous Ross sing "Sam Hall"; but I once heard it admirably sung by an American gentleman and entertainer at Sothern's rooms in Vigo Street, at a celebrated Sunday breakfast, not so very long before the popular "Lord Dundreary" died. Some people thought the grim song was blasphemous, others considered it vulgar, or silly. For my own part, it was to me intensely tragic. My friend, Arthur A'Beckett, son of the famous Gilbert Abbot A'Beckett, who was on the original staff of *Punch*, has in his excellent and entertaining "Green Room Recollections," unearthed a valuable description of "Sam Hall."

It was written by Percival Leigh, the popular "Professor" of the *Punch* round table, in the form of a parody of Samuel Pepys' diary, or, as he called it, "Mr. Pipp's diary." Anyhow here you have "Sam Hall" in a nutshell.

"To supper at the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane, wherein was much company, great and small, and did

call for kidneys and stout, and then a small glass of aqua vitæ and water, and thereto a cigar. While we supped the singers did entertain us with glees, and comical ditties, but lack to hear with what little wit the young sparks about town are tickled.

“But the thing that did most take me was to see and hear one Ross sing the song of ‘Sam Hall,’ the chimney sweep going to be hanged. For he had begrimed his muzzle to look unshaven, and in rusty black clothes, with a battered old hat on his crown, and a short pipe in his mouth, did sit upon the platform leaning over the back of a chair, so making believe that he was on his way to Tyburn. And then he did sing to a dismal Psalm tune how that his name was ‘Sam Hall’ and that he had been a great thief, and was now about to pay for all with his life; and thereupon he swore an oath which did make me somewhat shiver though divers laughed. Then in so many verses, how his master had badly taught him, and now he must hang for it; how he should ride up Holborn Hill in a cart, and the sheriffs would come, and then the parson, and preach to him, and after them would come the hangman, and at the end of each he did repeat his oath. Last of all how that he should go up to the gallows and desired the prayers of his audience, and ended by cursing them all round. Methinks it had been a sermon to a rogue to hear him, and I wish it may have done good to some of the company.

“Yet was his cursing very horrible, albeit to not a few it seemed a high joke, but I do doubt that they understood the song, and did only relish the oaths. Strange to think what a hit this song of ‘Sam Hall’ hath made, and how it has taken the town, and how popular it is, not only among tavern haunTERS and frequenters of night-houses, but also with the gentry and aristocracy, who do vote it a thing that ought to be heard, though a blackguard, and

· a look in at the Cider Cellars by night after dinner at their clubs to hear it sung."

The original Evans, who, like Paddy Green, was a musician, is described as a "bluff, fresh-coloured man, with whitish hair and had rather a bullying tone with the waiters." He was noted for his singing of "The Englishman," and "If I had a Thousand a Year." In those days Paddy Green was merely the chorus master, and comparatively unknown to the general public until in later years he took over the hotel and supper rooms, when the original Evans died.

Paddy Green and his snuff-box, I knew very well indeed when my Bohemian days first started. He was a short, white-haired man, with a rubicund face, a soft, bland, and unctuous manner, an Irish brogue that you could have sliced with a knife, and in religion a devout Catholic, who always got a bit of a mass or a litany into the programme whenever he found an opportunity.

He strutted about the room beaming, and smiling at everybody, and calling us all his "dear boys," assuming that he was intimately acquainted with the birth, parentage, and occupation of each of us. Being a Catholic, he was especially devoted to my friend Arthur Sketchley, who was also one of the regular attendants at Evans's. Paddy was responsible for the musical programmes, which he edited with immense care. I wish that I had kept all mine, for they not only contained the words of the best songs and glees of the time, but some very valuable information of their history.

Paddy Green was once an actor as well as a singer. He was the original watchman in "Tom and Jerry" at the Adelphi, the dramatic version of Pierce Egan's "Corinthian" romance of ancient London life, last revived at the Victoria under J. A. Cave's management

in 1870, under the title of "Life in London Fifty Years Ago." On this occasion J. H. Fitzpatrick and James Fawn were the Tom and Jerry, but I have forgotten who was Dusty Bob. It was an excellent revival and did *Cave* great credit.

Paddy Green prided himself on his qualities as a musician. When "*Antigone*" was playing at Covent Garden with Henry Vandenhoff and Miss Vandenhoff, in the principal characters, he trained the chorus, and I believe he also did the same thing when Madame Vestris produced the "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" also at Covent Garden Theatre.

About the time of the Crimean war a large and handsome hall with a practical stage at the end of it and a few boxes at the side were added to the old cosy smoking room with the huge fireplace and fine pictures. This was the Evans's that I knew in the fifties.

The music was admirable, and consisted chiefly of glees and madrigals sung by choir boys from Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Roman Catholic churches—poor pale-faced little urchins, who were kept up miserably late ; but their singing was a treat to hear in "*The Hardy Norseman*," "*Oh ! who will o'er the Downs so Free ?*" "*Down in a Flowery Vale*," "*The Silver Swan*," "*The Chough and Crow*," and "*All Among the Barley*." By tipping the conductor he would arrange for any glee or song to be sung that you desired.

In addition to dear old Paddy Green, a famous character at Evans's was Herr van Joel, a tall Dutchman, with a smooth face, who was "always retained on the establishment," in consequence of his long services. He used to parade amongst the tables and sell vile cigars, which were contained in a tumbler, begging for shillings and half-crowns on account of some mysterious



“benefit” which was always coming off at some equally mysterious hall in Soho, “one day next week.”

When there was a lull in the amusements; when the glees were exhausted and Mr. Jonghmann had finished his turn, dressed half as a woman and half as a man, when a dismal dirge-like singer called Henry Sidney—who was wonderfully popular on Boat Race nights, when he sang some special verses composed by the undergraduates—had told the world to “jog along as it will,” insisting that he would be “free and easy still,” when he had discussed certain debatable topics in a “quiet sort of way,” then Herr van Joel ascended the platform and “jodelled,” or gave an imitation of the animals of a farm yard with the aid of ventriloquy and a walking stick.

In course of time when Paddy Green was dead, and Evans’s as a popular resort had become rowdy—and eventually it went to the dogs—poor old Herr van Joel could no longer be “retained on the establishment,” but was found one bitter cold night dying in the snow in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.

And now about the famous “Calculating Waiter,” whose existence and peculiarities are so often disputed. I knew him well! He took money at the doors, he had a hole in his head caused by a fracas in which a soda-water bottle played an important part, and his veritable name was Skinner.

Some said he was an excellent fellow, and lent “fivers” and “tenners” to the youths of his acquaintance on the simple security of an “I O U.” Others maintained that his method of calculation was not only original and extraordinary, but audaciously fraudulent. His victims were the young and the nervous, who stood trembling in a “queue” at the exit door of Evans’s establishment before coming under the eagle eye and penetrating glance of the relentless Skinner.

No bills were ever offered to the visitor at Evans's ; but before you went out, you had to deliver an accurate statement to Skinner of all you had consumed, and he was determined that he, at any rate, would not be the loser in the transaction if you were the debtor. The calculation went on in this sort of fashion.

"What have you had Sir?"

"Chop."

"One chop, two and six."

"Potatoes."

"Potatoes, three and nine. Any bread?"

"No bread."

"No bread, four and two."

"One tankard of stout."

"One tankard of stout, five and ten. Cheese?"

"No cheese."

"No cheese, six and four. Sixpence for the waiter, Sir. Thank you, seven and four—eight shillings. Thank you, Sir! Next, please!"

There is a story told of a wag who added at the end of his eccentric account,

"Any bread, sir?"

"No bread."

"No bread, eight and five. Anything else, Sir?"

"One hole in the head."

"One hole in the head—ten shillings. Thank you, Sir! Next, please!"

Here at Evans's I heard the once celebrated Charles Sloman, the only English "improvisatore," who sang doggerel verses in allusion to the dress, manner, or deportment of any member of the audience in front of him, as thus :—

"And now I see a gentleman who's got a silken wipe ;  
He's smokin' a cigar now, he'd sooner have a pipe.  
And there is his companion, who all the ladies love ;  
He's putting down his hat now, and taking off his glove."

My friend, "Johnny" Gideon says:—

"Charles Sloman or Solomon, the greatest improvisatore ever known, was not only a poet but a fine musician. He composed the music of every song he wrote, except the comic ones, these being sung to old tunes. Among his compositions I remember 'The Maid of Judah,' 'A Daughter of Israel,' 'The Jew's Lovely Daughter,' 'The Tablets of Sinai,' 'A Jew's a Man for All That,' 'The Streams of Jordan,' 'The City of Silence,' 'A Jew hath the Heart of a Man,' 'Israel's Father Land,' 'Jephtha,' 'Tune me a Minstrel Lay,' and 'May God Preserve the Queen.' This song which he set to a most charming melody, was written in honour of the Queen's first State visit to the City, November 9, 1837.

"With all his talent he always thought he could sing, and yet he had not a musical note in his voice, which at all times was husky, and to those that did not know him it sounded, when speaking, as if he were suffering from a severe hoarseness. At the City of London Theatre, Norton Folgate, when under Osbaldiston's management, in 1840, Charles was billed to sing as an attraction his ballad 'The Maid of Judah,' the occasion being in aid of a Jewish charity. On the prompter calling time, on went Charley for his turn. He had no sooner finished croaking the first line, 'No more shall the children of Judah sing,' when a 'Yid' in the gallery shouted, 'I should think not with a voice like yours.'

"He was always successful when working the White Conduit House, the Union Saloon, Shoreditch, the Eagle Tavern—now Lusby's Music Hall—Mile End, the Temple of Harmony, High Street, Whitechapel, Vauxhall Gardens, Evans's, the Cider Cellars, the Coal Hole, and Doctor Johnson's, in Fleet Street,

then a concert hall, but now better known as the Albert Club.

“He wrote scores of comic songs for Harry Howell, Buckingham, W. H. Williams, Sam Vale, Jerry Herbert, Tom Jones, Penny Peniket, Joe Wells, Bob Glindon, Jack Sharpe, Harry Fox, Sam Cowell, and Ross of ‘Sam Hall’ notoriety. It was Charley Sloman who invented and arranged the mock law speeches, witty questions and replies, that were used by Baron Nicholson and suite when the Chief Baron started his Judge and Jury Society at the Garrick’s Head, Bow Street, in 1842. He died a pauper in the Strand Workhouse, aged a long way over ninety, in 1862 or 1863.”

Johnny Toole tells a very good story of the last days of Charles Sloman. He was engaged, as a matter of charity, as chairman at the Middlesex Music Hall in Drury Lane, commonly called “The Mogul.” Sloman was once celebrated for his singing of Braham’s famous song “The Wolf.” “Locks, bars, and bolts are rent asunder!” “Now the wolf he nightly prowls,” &c. Every night the “Mogul” audience used to raise a frantic cry of “The Wolf! The Wolf,” in order to draw Charles Sloman, just as they do to-day in connection with Chirgwin, the White Eyed Kaffir, and his beautifully sung “Blind Boy.”

One night, it was very late, and Sloman had been treated too liberally by the gentlemen around the chairman’s table. As usual, up went the cry of “The Wolf! The Wolf!”

The “only English improvisatore” staggered, and lurched on to the stage, and then said :

“Gentlemen, I’m bothered if I can sing that beastly old brute ‘The Wolf.’ I’ve sung him so often that there’s not a blessed hair left on his wretched body.”

Only Charles Sloman's language was a little more forcible than that !

Here also at Evans's, in addition to Jonghmans and Harry Sidney and Sloman, and many more, I heard Sam Cowell, who, in many respects, was the best comic singer I can remember. And he was an admirable actor into the bargain, as all must own who ever heard him give his "Life and death of bloody bold Macbeth," or "Alonzo the brave and the fair Imogene," or "Hamlet." In the ghost scene in "Macbeth," Cowell, on seeing Banquo's spirit, flung his long hair over his face and became for the moment an abject coward. The ghost having disappeared, the actor recovered himself, and said, "But, being gone, I am a man again. Ah ! me !"

The first verse of Cowell's Hamlet I shall never forget, for it recalls not only Sam Cowell, but my dear old friend Frank Dowling, the editor of *Bell's Life*, with whom I went, not only to Evans's, but to many a merry "mill," or prize fight, down the river by Purfleet, in the days of the "pugs."

Dowling sang the Hamlet song almost as well as Cowell. It started thus :—

"A hero's life I'll sing, his story shall my pen mark ;

He was not the King, but 'Amlet, Prince of Denmark.

His mammy, she was young, the crown she'd set her eyes on ;

Her husband stopped her tongue ; she stopped his ears with pison."

Nearly every Friday afternoon, after my War Office work was over, I used to go up to Dowling's room at *Bell's Life* office in the Strand, next door to the Strand Theatre, in order to see such famous pugilists as Nat Langham, Tom Sayers, John C. Heenan, Jem Mace, Bob Travers the black, and many more of the old-world "pugs" ; for they came to *Bell's Life* either to deposit stakes for a fight or to ask the excellent editor with the

eyeglass advice on some important matter connected with "Fistiana."

What scenes there were on the night of a prize fight at the West End! The "swells" or "Corinthians" as they were called by Pierce and Tom Egan in *Bell*, were up all night at the flash night houses round and about the Haymarket, and we had to go to learn our "rendezvous" at daybreak to "Owen Swift's," or "Ould Nat's," or some of the sporting public-houses in the neighbourhood, such as that kept by the famous light weight "Alec Reid," the gentlemanly boxer.

And what a sight was the railway station from which we started in the morning! Unless protected by a couple of prizefighters you were liable to be "run over" by two blackguards, who guarded each doorway leading to the platform. Up went the gentleman's arms, crash went his hat over his eyes, away went his watch, his money, every valuable in his possession; and then, to add insult to injury, he was literally kicked penniless into the train, probably to be smacked in the face all the way down to the "mill." These were the so-called "glorious days of prizefighting!"

After the famous prize fight between Tom Sayers and John C. Heenan, the American pugilist, that aroused the enthusiasm of all England and turned Tom into a hero, my friend Frank Dowling got a little sick of the "noble art." At the fight in question, when the ropes were cut to prevent Tom Sayers from being strangled, there was a *melée*, and Dowling, the referee, got terribly mauled. It has always been a disputed point if the referee gave any decision at all, as he was really unable at the end, and in all this riot and hubbub, to see what was going on.

John C. Heenan was indirectly connected with the stage. He was a splendid specimen of manhood, and he

married a woman as finely proportioned as himself. This was Ada Isaacs Menken, the mystic poetess, who became famous by riding a bareback steed clad in silk fleshings in "Mazeppa" at Astley's. Menken was an extraordinary woman, a woman with a soul, and really of great refinement of nature. She captivated in turn famous poets, and novelists of the first class, dramatists by the score, and, of course, journalists. If any one is lucky enough to possess a copy of her poems, "Infelicia," it will be seen that she was a woman of very curious talent. I have seen some of her love-letters, and they were very beautiful. I am able to print one example, and I think it is worth preserving as descriptive of a curious artistic nature :—

"CATALDI'S, 42 DOVER STREET.

"*Friday a.m.*

"To-day, Roberto, I should like to see you if you are good-tempered, and think you could be bored with me and my ghosts. They will be harmless to you, these ghosts of mine; they are sad, soft-footed things that wear my brain, and live on my heart—that is, the fragment I have left to be called *heart*. Apropos of that I hear you are married—I am glad of that; I believe all good men should be married. Yet I don't believe in women being married. Somehow they all sink into nonentities after this epoch in their existences. That is the fault of female education. They are taught from their cradles to look upon marriage as the one event of their lives. That accomplished, nothing remains. However, Byron might have been right after all: 'Man's love is of his life a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence.' If this is true we do not wonder to find so many stupid wives—they are simply doing the 'whole existence' sort of thing. Good women are rarely clever, and clever women are rarely good. I am

digressing into mere twaddle from what I started out to say to you.

"Come when you can get time, and tell me of our friends, the gentle souls of air; mine fly from me only, to fill my being with the painful remembrance of their lost love for me—even *me*! once the blest and chosen. Now a royal tigress waits, in her lonely jungle, the coming of the king of forests. Brown gaiters not excluded. Yours, through all stages of local degradation.

"INFELIX MENKEN."

Fancy a woman who played Mazeppa in pink silk fleshings, and married a prize-fighter, writing like this to relieve her "soul"—and she had one:—

"Where is the promise of my years  
Once written on my brow!  
Ere errors, agonies, and fears  
Brought with them all that speaks in tears,  
Ere I had sunk beneath my peers,  
Where sleeps that promise now?

"Myself! alas, for theme so poor,  
A theme but rich in Fear,  
I stand a wreck on Error's shore,  
A spectre not within the door,  
A homeless shadow evermore,  
An exile lingering here!"

Here we have the "cry of the heart" of a wounded woman. How many artists on the stage will echo this wail of a sister artist!



## CHAPTER XI

### “THE DECADENT DRAMA”

I HAVE duly recorded the date of my birth. The next important milestone in my life was reached on the 23rd of May, 1860.

Behold me then at the age of eighteen walking down Regent Street from Albany Street, Regent's Park,—our new home after leaving Hoxton for ever—to the War Office, Pall Mall, there to take up my appointment as a Government clerk, my nomination having been presented to me by my father's old friend, the Right Hon. Sidney Herbert, afterwards Lord Herbert of Lea, whose mournful statue may be seen in front of the great hall door in the semi-circular courtyard.

Was ever a lad happier than I on that bright and sunny day? I doubt it. I had passed my competitive examination; I was posted to one of the best offices in the Civil Service; I had not a care or trouble in the world; no debts, no worries, no enemies; a splendid constitution; a public school training; and a fixed determination not to shrink the responsibilities of life. The world went very well with me on that 23rd of May, 1860. Not of age yet, I was my own master, with a new suit of clothes on my back, a latchkey on my chain, and a clean crisp five-pound note in my pocket.

It seemed to me “the maddest, merriest day” I had

ever experienced. It was Derby Day. The horns were blowing, and the coaches and carriages, with postilions in white beaver hats and blue jackets, were dashing past me. The girls were all smiling; the hampers, with the goodies and champagne packed up behind, were swinging behind the rumble. If ever I experienced the joy of living, I did so that glad May Day.

But still as I passed Madame White's new milliner's shop—a very small concern in 1860—and crossed over to Verrey's, the same excellent establishment to-day as forty years ago, a rendezvous for the best and most accomplished bright spirits of the age; and looked, I suppose for the first time, as I neared the old Quadrant, at the lady on horseback in the riding habit, and the gentleman in pink on his hunter in another window on the O. P. side, who have not moved or trotted a yard since 1860 from out of Nicoll's shop window; and was sorely tempted to buy some cigars on my own account at Carlin's, where I had bought so many "tobaccos" for the governor; and once more plumed my feathers, sniffing the air of independence, I was meditative also and recalled my father's last words before I started from home, crowned with the blessed privilege of freedom.

I had been summoned into the study in which so many brilliant articles had been written, and was addressed somewhat in this fashion:

"My boy, I can do nothing more for you. I have given you a good education. You have profited by it, and obtained, by competitive examination, the appointment for which you were nominated. Your good mother has seen to your outfit, and I am certain she has spared nothing, for she is very fond of you. You are now to be in receipt of a salary of £150 a year, paid

quarterly. You may either live at home or in lodgings, as suits you best. If at home, you will have to contribute to the expenses of the household. The choice is yours. Here is your latchkey, but try not to be too late, and let us know your movements in the morning, as if you dine out we should like to be notified of the fact in good time. I don't want to coerce you in any way. Oh, by the way, here is a five-pound note to carry you along until your salary is paid. I can do no more. God bless and prosper you, my dear son !”

The day before that memorable interview I had thrown out a hint about the delight of going down to the Derby, in the hope of seeing Thormanby win,—which he did ; but my father checked my enthusiasm.

“ Take my advice and don't go down to the Derby. The Chief Clerk at the War Office has written to ask you to report yourself in Pall Mall on the 23rd. If he had meant the 24th he would have said so.” The advice in both cases was admirable. Had my father held out hopes of an allowance, I should probably have scorned in the after time the welcome crutch of journalism.

By going down to Pall Mall, instead of to Epsom, on the 23rd of May, 1860, I was placed over the heads of six brother competitors, who all preferred Epsom Downs to the “ sweet shady side of Pall Mall.” In after life that seniority of a few hours meant very much to me. It meant promotion, in advance, of six men quite as good, and perhaps a good deal better, than myself.

So, in fear and trembling, I was introduced to a bright, brisk little man, Mr. Drewry, our Chief Clerk ; I was escorted down stairs to a room on the ground floor facing the pavement of Pall Mall, a room with a large plate-glass window which had once belonged to Harding's linen-draper's shop—by Charles Wylde, son of General Wylde,

who was destined to be a very favourite companion ; and having been introduced to the head of my room, Edward Stillwell, who quickly became a theatre-going chum, I was planted down to a desk and set to work at once on copying draft letters, indexing pay-lists, and registering dead soldiers' effects.

I felt like a new boy at school again, and did not like it at first ; but the shyness soon wore off on both sides. In a few weeks' time I was nicknamed the "Kitten" on account of my playful and spitfire temperament, and young innocence was soon initiated by his companions into the mysteries of Leicester Square dining-rooms, Haymarket supper saloons and the supposed after joys—I never thought them anything of the kind—of Cremorne Gardens, the Argyll Rooms, the Holborn Casino, Kate Hamilton's, Coney's, Sam's and Jessop's ; the horrible den at 222, Piccadilly, called "The Pic" ; and, that last dread rendezvous of men about town in 1860, Mott's, in Foley Street, Portland Place.

Before I started for that never-to-be-forgotten walk down Regent Street on Derby Day, 1860, I had of course studied *The Times* newspaper at breakfast time to see what they were doing at the theatres ; for, now that I was free, with a latchkey of my own, I determined to become a desperate playgoer.

The stage was in a very sorry state in 1860. The drama of decadence preceded the renaissance of the drama under the Bancrofts and Tom Robertson.

At the Haymarket, Buckstone had put on a little play called "Somebody Else," for the sake of three amateurs, probably the pupils of Mr. Coe, the stage manager, who utilised his school and the Haymarket stage in a curious fashion, which resulted subsequently in an action in which Sothorn was concerned. One of the amateurs

...the others were Maggie Brennan and Charles Coghlan, both of whom were destined to make a very distinguished mark on the stage, though at that time the critics did not favour them with one complimentary remark. This amateur trifle was followed by one of Edmund Falconer's verbose failures called "The Family Secret."

In the cast were the majority of the old stock company, Buckstone, Chippendale, Howe, young Farren, as he was then called; old Rogers, with his groaning and gasping utterance; Edwin Villiers, a handsome young man; Mrs. Wilkins, the widow of Serjeant Wilkins, a celebrated advocate; Miss Henrade, a lovely girl, the sister of Sophie Young; Mrs. Buckingham White, the wife of Leicester Buckingham, the dramatic critic; and Miss Amy Sedgwick, who became famous in Tom Taylor's "Unequal Match." No, the Haymarket did not look very promising.

At the Princess's, Phelps was playing *Bernaccio* in the "Fool's Revenge." I saw Edwin Booth play it better in the same theatre (rebuilt) many long years after. Carlotta Leclercq was only to be seen in a farce "Thrice Married."

It was a poor bill also at the Adelphi. "It's an Ill Wind that blows Nobody Good," with Alfred Wigan as Simon Strap, Mrs. Alfred Wigan as Lady Welford, and Johnny Toole as Hunk. This was followed by "Our Female American Cousin," with most of the Adelphi stock in it. Stuart, ever on the grumble because he was not recognised as a first-class tragedian; W. H. Eburne, who played boys, and gay dogs, when he was well advanced in years; Kate Kelly and Julia Daly. Charles Selby and C. J. Smith were of course on the scene; and so was Henrietta Simms, a handsome lady and very





*Photo by* PAUL BEDFORD. [*Adolphe Beau.*



*Photo by* GEO. BELMORE. [*W. H. Gilbert Tat*



*Photo by* [*Fradelle & Marshall*  
TOOLE, MATHEWS, AND PHELPS.



*Photo by* [*Adolphe Beau.*  
TOOLE AND BEDFORD.

can be acted, who can be acted, and reason and imagination. It will be with Johnny Keble in John Hollingshead's excellent only and original farce "The Birthplace of Podgers," assisted by his old friend John Billington, whose brilliantly clever wife also appeared during the evening.

The Billingtons were so long associated with the Adelphi in the days of Benjamin Webster; they are, husband as well as wife, such valuable types of the old-world actor and actress,—hard working, persistent, indefatigable, as compared with the gaudy, glittering, over-coloured butterflies of to-day, who flit between the sober stage and the fringe of society—making of their art, a holiday pastime, instead of a solemn and serious business; who have no time to rehearse or study because they are mainly occupied at bazaars, fancy fairs, drawing-room meetings, church benefits—being interviewed and what not; and come to their duties fagged, listless, and ignorant of the words of the characters entrusted to them,—that I have persuaded my old friends to tell me, for the guidance of others, what an actor's life was like in the great struggle between the provinces and London, experienced by an Edmund Kean as well as a Benjamin Webster.

The term that I should apply to the management of the Haymarket and the Adelphi in 1860 would not be inadequacy. By no means that. But certainly I should charge it with slovenliness. Buckstone was as popular a comedian as ever trod the stage, the mere sound of his voice behind the scenes creating a roar of laughter; Benjamin Webster, never sufficiently appreciated, was as good an actor as I have ever seen, deriving his inspired moments from the best French school at a time



that the school in question was the finest in the world.

But neither Buckstone nor Webster were ideal managers. As years went on they became careless, and allowed things to slide into untidiness and a "go-as-you-please" system. The scenery at their theatres was poor, the wardrobes hopelessly inefficient, and the casting of a play a matter of apparent indifference. It is not surprising therefore that Buckstone and Webster, notwithstanding their stock companies and congregation of fossils, should be saved by stars.

Edward Askew Sothorn saved Buckstone with his Lord Dundreary. Webster was in those early sixties three times rescued: first, by Dion Boucicault with the "Colleen Bawn"; secondly, by Miss Bateman with "Leah"; thirdly, by Joseph Jefferson in "Rip van Winkle." In all these successes John Billington or his wife, sometimes both, were connected; but before I touch upon all these plays it may be well for the young actor and actress to know how success was made forty years ago, certainly not by aimless frivolity and fine clothes, but by industry, and perseverance, and hard work.

Quite recently Mrs. John Billington told me that a great many friends and acquaintances had said to her and her husband, "Why don't you write your experiences and memoirs?" "Well," she replied, "one thing my record may lead to, and that is, making young aspirants for dramatic fame more contented.

"One of my pupils, a handsome young girl, came to me for advice, she had been offered one guinea per week for her first engagement, and she had refused it! I answered her thus: 'Do you know what I had when I first drew money? Five shillings per week!' The young

lady smiled, saying, 'Oh, impossible, Mrs. Billington!' But it is true, nevertheless.

"I really began my stage work at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, under the management of the late Charles Dillon, manager and actor—and an admirable actor too. My first appearance was as the Fool in 'King Lear'—the boy in 'Belphegor'—and Albert in 'William Tell'—in connection with which an amusing incident occurred. I had played Albert for some time with my able teacher, when he came to me and said he had engaged a lady, and would I on this occasion play the part of Albert's mother, Emma Tell?"

"I did not like it, but I consented. Now, there may be some living who remember my then manager to have been a clever, careless fellow, and will understand that he did not attend the rehearsal. 'Oh, let Mortimer (my then stage name) and the new lady rehearse their scenes,'" he said. The day, came and the lady—she was elderly, short, and fat,—the night of the performance likewise, and when she walked on to the stage Dillon's look of horror was comical. I confess I felt a sort of malicious pleasure when, as Emma, I placed my hand on his shoulder after the trial shot and said, 'William, oh, William, to be the father of a boy like that!' which was received by a prolonged roar of laughter. Needless to say I was reinstated as Albert.

"From Manchester we—Mr. Billington and myself—went to the Royal Theatre, Glasgow—now a Post Office. It was the first season after the death of Mr. Alexander, and the theatre was opened by Mercer Simpson, the elder—with Mr. Hall as stage manager. The first play produced was 'The Hunchback' and I cannot do better than quote the notice in the *Glasgow Examiner*.

“ ‘On Monday evening Miss Glyn and Mr. James Bennett appeared upon the boards of the Theatre Royal, Dunlop Street, in “The Hunchback.” This play was also announced for Thursday evening, but through some unknown cause Miss Glyn did not appear. Julia was personated by Miss Adeline Mortimer, with very high success. So enthusiastic were the audience with the entire performance, that no fewer than five of the company were called before the curtain with Miss Mortimer, who, as a substitute for Miss Glyn, quite reconciled the audience to the non-appearance of the star. Mr. Vandenhoff was the Sir Thomas Clifford; the late Nye Chart the Fathom; Mr. John Billington the Modus, who as the love-struck youth, personated the character in a natural and not overstrained vein of the ludicrous.’

“Oh, how happy we were over our breakfast next morning to read this! Critics—clever ones too—have often said to me,—‘Oh, but you people don’t care for what we write.’ Ah, if they only knew our longing for the daily paper! If they knew how sad they make us when they are severe with us they would sometimes pause before they wrote some lines of censure. It is not in the first flush of youth before we know the meaning of the word acting—but after, when we know the responsibility of ‘creating’ parts.

“Soon after ‘The Hunchback’ episode, Mr. J. L. Davenport came to Dunlop Street Theatre to star in ‘Black-Eyed Susan,’ and I was standing amongst a group of merry girls,—amongst them the two Miss Corrys—when Mr. Davenport came up to me and said, ‘Could you play Susan?’—‘Oh, yes, Sir.’—‘Well, you shall.’ And I did, and danced with him a double horn-pipe! Ye gods! it makes me shudder now to think of it in ‘looking back.’

"In the company there was our old and esteemed friend Nye Chart, Henry Vandenhoff, Julia Bennett, James Bennett, the two sisters Corry, and Miss Payne, —a sister of the late Harry Payne—now living, I think, in Manchester. The season was a short one, and we then went to Edinburgh to the Theatre Royal, under the management of Mr. Lloyd, where Miss Blanche Fane,—(a lovely girl, the original of 'The Little Treasure' at the Haymarket, London), and her father, Mr. Ranger, —were playing a star engagement.

"On the night of our arrival the lady was ill, and once more I played Julia in 'The Hunchback.' Here for the first time I met Miss Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft), Miss Eleanor Bufton, Eliza Arden, Edwin Villiers, Henry Haigh, H. T. Craven, Miss Nicolls, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Harcourt Bland, and the star, Edmund Glover. Haigh was a beautiful singer, he used to amuse us often. One story of his I well remember. He had been invited out one evening, and being the lion was asked to sing. 'No,' he said. 'I never sing at private parties.' 'Oh!' said his aggrieved hostess; 'but we quite expected you to sing after supper, we gave you *two sorts* of cheese, and an excellent supper.' 'No, Madam,' said he, 'ungrateful as I may appear, not even *two sorts* of cheese will tempt me.'

"We were at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, under the management of Mr. Calcraft, and dear old Granby. The stage manager was Dr. Joy, Charles Kean's factotum, who afterwards helped Colonel Bateman to boom his daughter at the Adelphi. We met there our dear friend Tom King, who was the leading man, and Mr. and Mrs. Saville. We used to play three nights drama, and three nights grand opera, with Miss Lanza and Sims Reeves.

Once during 'the Honeymoon' Juliana was being played by a sister of the celebrated Mrs. Nesbitt, and at the speech and exit of Juliana, where the Duke said, 'I took you for a wife, and e'er I've done I'll know you for a good one,' she has a speech, 'You shall find me a woman who scorns to be taught submission, when her swelling heart cries out Revenge.' She was wearing a large plume of feathers, and as she tossed her head, one of the feathers fell from the plume, and a wag in the gallery cried out, 'You're moulting, ma'am!' to the lady's pardonable indignation, and a roar from the house.

"At Bradford I opened in Margaret in 'Love's Sacrifice,' and it was a joy to me to act in that town, for it was there where Mr. Billington began his boy's career with a well-known firm of civil engineers.

"One incident at Bradford I well remember. I was making a dress for Cora in 'Pizarro,' of unbleached calico, with a Grecian key border in braid, when a very old friend of my John came in. Those were the days when the modiste was not advertised in the playbill, and when the acting was of more consequence than the dressing. He said, 'What are you doing, my lass?' 'Making a dress for Cora.' 'What! of calico? Nay, put it aside. I'll get you something better than that, my lass;' and he did.

"He was a woolstapler, and brought me a huge bundle of white alpaca, and out of that my dress was made,—and didn't I fancy myself! The dear giver is alive now; and then, as now, an ardent lover of the playhouse, and father of a family of braw lads and lassies, and he and my John were boys in round jackets together. He entertained our dear friend Toole in the long ago; and, while I am writing about him, I will relate a little story of the first night Toole passed under his roof. The bedroom

was so very fanciful that he said it made him so nervous that he felt as though he ought to undress on the landing.

"From Bradford we were engaged by Mr. Gill and Mr. William Sidney for the Theatre Royal, Leamington, where we first made the acquaintance of one of the best fellows in the profession,—or out of it,—Billy Belford—kind and good. He afterwards became a well-known and dearly loved London man. He used to boast he was the man who always put out the gas at the Arundel club. Ah! the pity of it! Too soon was his own light put out!

"Charles Mathews came over from Birmingham to Leamington to star. He recounted a very pleasing little story of going to the station, following two elderly ladies, and overhearing this conversation: 'So, my dear, you have been to the theatre? and what did you see?' As every one knows Mathews played Sir Charles Coldstream in 'Used Up.' 'Well, dear, I saw Charles Mathews and Charles Coldstream, but which *was* which, I won't pretend to say.'

"Eventually we received a good offer from the manager of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and so made our first great move onward. My engagement was for juvenile lead and seconds to stars of repute. I shall never forget my disappointment, on first going into the town, to find Charlotte Cushman's name in large letters, and I had to play Mrs. Bromley in a piece called 'Simpson and Co.'

"Miss Cushman was a fine actress. I played with her all through her engagement,—Aldebella to her Bianca in 'Fazio,' and finally Juliet to her Romeo. She was kind and complimentary always. One incident I remember vividly. She always did a front scene (omitted

now), to prepare for discovering Juliet dead. This I had forgotten and gone to my dressing-room, when a voice called 'Miss Mortimer—Juliet.' 'Not me,' I said. 'Yes, the stage is waiting.' Oh, the horror of the situation! With almost one bound I reached the bottom of the stairs, and on to my bed; but when the scene opened the Juliet was breathing heavily, instead of lying still and death-like. Miss Cushman was a kindly woman. I went to her grave when I was in Boston—a tall white marble column overlooking the city, very plain, simply recording her name.

"The actress whose place I took was Mrs. Pauncefort, who had been in Birmingham for some time and was a great favourite. It was a good company. Mr. T. C. King, the leading man; Mr. Atkins, low comedian; Mr. Billington, Mr. H. Sinclair, Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Barton (the immortal 'John'), Mr. Watkins, Mr. and Mrs. F. Raymond, Mr. and Mrs. H. Leigh, Miss Vivash, and Miss Ellen Thirlwall. Also Miss Goward and Laura Honey, a daughter of the celebrated Mrs. Honey. It was in schools like this the art of acting was learned in the bygone time, when the stock season was lucrative to both manager and actor. There, too, I first met and acted with Mr. Phelps, Mr. Ben Webster, Madame Celeste, and Sims Reeves, with whom I played Meg Merrilies.

"As it happened, I played the same character with his son, Harry Bertram Reeves, at the Brighton Theatre many years afterwards.

"When Mr. Phelps was once playing in Birmingham, I, knowing he was most particular, was more than anxious to do my best; and the first part I played with him was Mrs. Beverley in the 'Gamester.' 'Remember,' he said, 'I fall three times'; so I eagerly

watched and counted, and then fell across the dead body. What was my amazement when he said, 'I was not dead.' I said, 'You fell three times'; but our argument was cut short by having to appear before the curtain. The next night he altered a cue for one of my entrances. Again I watched: again I was wrong, and he was vexed.

"Then for his benefit he played Melantius in 'The Bridal,' and very finely. I was his sister in the piece; but when the curtain came down, in a moment of petulance, while there was an enthusiastic call, I said, 'No, Mr. Phelps, I will not go before the curtain with you, as I have been so unfortunate during your engagement.' 'Oh, come,' said he, 'your performance to-night has made amends for all.' I also played Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt to his Sir Pertinax MacSycophant in 'The Man of the World,' a magnificent performance. At this time, Mr. Billington received an offer from Mr. Ben Webster to go to London.

"This was the beginning of an engagement that lasted for over fifteen years. I did not go there at once, but joined Messrs. Shepherd and Creswick at the Surrey; and on the same night, and in the same piece, Miss Eliza Johnstone made her first appearance in London with me, and this commenced a friendship which only ended with her lamented death.

"Before I take leave of dear old Birmingham, let me tell a little story that I have often told. Our Saturday nights were great nights, and crowded audiences always, and a strong bill had to be presented. On one occasion I was the oft-persecuted damsel (I forget the name of the play), and in order to make my way from some place where I was detained, a good melodramatic actor, named Seton, was the villain and prevented me leaving,



and of course we had to fight a short combat ; and for one week we daily and almost hourly, while I was in the theatre, rehearsed this, and we were in the theatre in those days rehearsing usually from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon.

“ Mr. Seton would say, ‘ Come on, Mortimer, let us try over the fight ’ ; then he, whistling the music, we would rehearse in downright earnest. Saturday night came, music cue given, we came ‘ to guard ’ ; but no, not once did our swords touch. When my sword was up, his was down. This roused the merriment of the gallery, who applauded, laughed, and encouraged us ; the band joined in, until, half mad with vexation, I struck him over the head, threw my sword at him, and marched off. He obligingly fell ; but we had a stormy scene off the stage, each blaming the other, and for some days we did not speak as we passed by, until I one day remarked to him, ‘ Oh, Seton, I am sick at heart ! ’ and we became good friends once more.

“ We did not like parting with our Birmingham friends at all. We were not long in the provinces ; but in one of our engagements with John Coleman at Lincoln, we had the pleasure of meeting Joseph—or Joe Hatton—as those who love him call him, then on the staff of the leading local paper ; and this was the commencement of a friendship that I am happy to say still exists, and long may it do so ; and with this I must, for the present, say farewell to the country theatres and begin the record of our London engagements.

“ London, then as now, was the goal that the profession aimed at ; but in the old time, *learn* your profession—and then—London. Now the young aspirants say, ‘ I don’t want to leave London,’ hence the incompetency. Mr. Billington went to the old Adelphi and met such

artists as Benjamin Webster, Madame Celeste, Miss Woolgar, the graceful, beautiful, refined actress, Kate Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mary Keeley, Edward Wright, Paul Bedford, Tom Stuart, Bob Romer; Charles Selby, David Fisher, and a host of others. This was the beginning of a delightful engagement extending over many many years,—and under such a chief too!—engagements never less than three years. Then the salaries were not as they are now, nor theatres as numerous. Mr. Billington at once stepped into public favour, his first part being in 'Like and Unlike.'

"On Monday, the 9th of May, 1859, we both played in 'Ici on parle Français' with our dear friend Toole. Mine was a bad part. Mr. Billington was Victor Dubois, the Frenchman, and he played it in London and the country with Mr. Toole for many years.

"Soon after this the old theatre was condemned, and never shall I forget its last night. At the supper on the stage, in addition to the company, there were present Thackeray, John Leech, Oxenford, Albert Smith, Hogarth, Wilkie Collins.

"When the toasts and brilliant speeches were over, a fine noble head like a lion's was thrust over the stage box, and its owner asked if he was in time. This was the celebrated Mark Lemon, and he was hailed with delight by all present, and he soon was the noisiest of the band. What a congregation of brilliant men! How more than delighted we sat and listened!

"During the building of the new Adelphi, the present one, the company went over to the Surrey, where we played 'The Flowers of the Forest,' 'Jack Sheppard,' and many other pieces, staying there a month. Then we went to the Queen's Theatre, Dublin, where we again met our old and esteemed friend, John L. Toole, and

commenced a friendship which still exists ; and long may he be spared, and we to enjoy his friendship !

“ I remember one night after the performance, having taken a covered car to go to our respective lodgings (the Tooles lived near the theatre, we a little further off), and when Mr. and the late Mrs. Toole alighted, he came to Billington and said, ‘ Jack, I have given him a shilling, if you give him sixpence it will be ample.’ The cabman, with a roguish look on his face, having heard the remark, came to the door and said, ‘ Sure, don’t I know one gentleman will not be worse than the other?’ which of course gained him the other sixpence.

“ There was an old Irishwoman who used to sell playbills ; and you could hear her long before you saw her, crying, ‘ Ryal or Queen’s—bill of the play.’ It was the custom then in writing to a friend to enclose a playbill ; so one night, while we were playing the ‘ Green Bushes,’ on our way to the theatre, Mr. Billington accosted her and said, ‘ Give me one ; how much?’ ‘ Green Bush’? she replied, ‘ or Ireland as it was? Begorra, it’s Ireland as it never was, or will be.’ ‘ How much?’ he replied. ‘ Twopence.’ ‘ Go along, it’s one penny.’ ‘ Ah, well,’ she replied, as she handed him the bill, ‘ by jabers ! That’s Ireland as it is!’ pursuing her way, with her cry, ‘ Ryal or Queen’s !’

“ We played, too, Dickens’s ‘ Nicholas Nickleby.’ Toole was ‘ Old Squeers,’ and in the noted schoolroom scene, where Toole was giving brimstone and treacle, suddenly there rose a great cry and commotion in the gallery (Mr. Billington was Nicholas, who, as tutor, was seated with the boys), ‘ Give Billington some!’ The cry was taken up by the pit as well as the gallery ; and at last

Toole said, 'Come on, Jack; pretend to take some.' 'No, I will not.' This made them more noisy when they saw he resented it. 'Give Billington some!' they continued, until the noise increased to an uproar; and at last, in desperation, Nicholas went through the form of taking some; and then the audience shouted, 'He's taken it; three cheers for Billington!' And so the play went on.

"What a good audience they were! How witty and smart, but how noisy! I remember being on the stage once in the most trying situation during this same engagement. During the performance of 'Othello' there was what is called in theatrical parlance a 'stick.' Mrs. H. Webb was the Desdemona, a gentleman named John Silver—a clever man who always played the villains—was Iago, and myself Emilia. The three of us were on the stage together, and at the lines where Emilia says, 'To be called wanton, would it not make one weep?' there was a pause. 'You,' said Iago, looking at me. 'No.' 'You, then,' turning to Desdemona. 'No, not me,' she said, looking helplessly round.

"The situation grew desperate and the audience impatient. Then the hiss came, and at last so marked, that, in sporting phrase, the saddle must be put on the right horse. The prompter was nowhere to be seen. Iago at the back of the stage. I was nearest the prompt side. At last the prompter was brought. He said, 'Where are you? What were the last words?' I told him. 'You, Sir,' he said. 'Beshrew him for it—how comes this trick upon him?' So, reluctantly and bad-temperedly, Iago was obliged to take up the words, and he was rewarded by sound hissing, and the ladies were honoured by a special call,—but, oh! the agony of it!

“While I am on this subject I will relate a little anecdote. I so often read of actors and actresses being asked what they ‘feel?’ do they cry really? and so on. This in part may answer a good many questions unasked. When that most popular play ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ was being played at the Queen’s, Dublin, our Iago was the Legree, and in the scene with Uncle Tom, where he says, ‘Why, you cuss, ain’t you mine, body and soul?’ The slave replies, ‘No, Massa! My body am yours, but my soul belongs there!’ pointing upwards. Clap-trap! but always brought down a long round of applause. So, when the two actors came off the stage, Uncle Tom said to Legree, ‘My scene went splendidly!’ ‘What!’ said Silver, ‘your scene?’ ‘Yes!’ ‘We’ll see whose scene it is to-morrow night.’ So accordingly the next night when it came on, instead of speaking brutally as before, he uttered the words laughingly, as though in chaff. No sympathy for Uncle Tom and no applause! ‘Now,’ said Silver afterwards, ‘whose scene is it?’ This shows how we are at the mercy of our fellow actors. A word, a movement of the hand, may destroy a point; and from the highest to the lowest we all have to work together to ensure success.

“We played all our Adelphi pieces at the Queen’s, Dublin, and at the conclusion of the engagement we came back to London, where soon came the opening of the new theatre, so anxiously looked forward to.

“We were present at the laying of the foundation stone of the present Adelphi Theatre, long before it was again restored by the popular and estimable Brothers Gatti.

“A group of gentlemen well known to fame were

assembled round a hollow, over which hung by strong chains a ponderous block of rock—the foundation of the Adelphi that was to be—and by the side of it stood Benjamin Webster, trowel in hand, ready to settle the mass into its place; and thus he commenced a structure with which his fortune was hereafter to be so intimately connected. The stone sank slowly into its bed, deftly guided by the skilful hand of our chief, and was secured in its place with masonic precision. The shouts which greeted the performance of the operation were real hearty English cheers, in comparison with which stage shouts would have sounded feeble. The applauders cleared their throats to cheer again after drinking bumpers of champagne to the toast, 'Success to the new theatre!' Mr. Webster returned thanks. Beneath the stone in a sealed bottle and tin case, memorials were deposited, collected by John Gallot, the prompter at the old Adelphi for thirty-eight years. These consisted of coins of George the Fourth, William the Fourth, and Victoria, a bill of the last night's performance in the old house, and a paper bearing the following inscription in the handwriting of Mr. Webster :

“ ‘ The New Royal Adelphi Theatre. The foundation stone of the new theatre was laid by Benjamin Webster, sole proprietor.

Date—Thursday, July 15th, 1858.

“ ‘ And God speed the building ! ’

At the moment of lowering the stone, the inspiring notes of the Highland Bugle March sounded from a neighbouring building, blown by John Edwards, the Adelphi hall-keeper, an old guardsman, who, at Waterloo when he was a mere boy, sounded the final charge for the Guards, 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!' And the bugle he used was the same instrument which on that glorious day rang out its call over the Belgian battle-

field, as is attested by the following inscription engraved on a piece of brass attached to it :

“ ‘John Edwards was field trumpeter to Lord Edward Somerset on that ever memorable day, and he served his country for thirty-two years during the reign of three Kings, and her present Majesty the Queen. He was discharged from the First Life Guards in the year 1841, while serving under the command of Colonel Cavendish.’ ”

On the whole the dramatic market was in a somewhat depressed condition on the 23rd of May, 1860. Two lovely women, Miss Cottrell and Miss Herbert, assisted by Mrs. Leigh Murray, George Vining and Walter Gordon the author, were playing in “Dearest Mamma.” Robson was acting in “Uncle Zachary” a new version by John Oxenford of an old French farce “L’Oncle Baptiste.” It had been acted before at the Haymarket in 1842 under the title of “Peter and Paul.” But Zachary Clinch was not one of Robson’s successes.

The celebrated prize fight between Tom Sayers the Englishman and John C. Heenan the American, or “Benicia Boy” as he was called, produced a crop of farces. The first was at the Olympic, “B. B.” (Benicia Boy) written by Frank Burnand and Montagu Williams, two old Eton “chums.” The principal characters were taken by Robson and Horace Wigan. The same subject turned up at the “Vic” (Queen Victoria’s own theatre), in a farce called “The Champion’s Belt.” Tom Sayers was played by A. Raymond, and Heenan by W. H. Pitt. I find it again at the Britannia, “The Champion of the World, or Tom and the Boy.” Tom, W. Crauford, and the Boy, C. Pitt.

The Sayers and Heenan prize fight created such enormous excitement that so rich a crop of farces or *pièces de circonstance* can readily be understood ; but I cannot conceive why so many theatres on the same night

should play "Jack Long of Texas." I find it at the Victoria, the Marylebone and the Britannia Theatres. The last was called "Jack Long of Texas, or the Shot in the Eye."

On the same night might have been seen Marie Wilton at the Strand in "The Miller and his Men"; Burnand's burlesque of "Dido" at the St. James's; James Anderson as King Lear, with Miss Marriott at the Standard, Shoreditch; Mrs. S. Lane as Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons" at the Britannia; "Never Too Late to Mend" at the Effingham, Whitechapel, anticipating Charles Reade's Princess's drama by many years; and Tom King as Virginius at the City of London Theatre.

At the St. James's Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul advertised their farewell season of one of the most successful entertainments of the day. It was announced that "Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul, at the St. James's Hall, will give their successful comic and musical entertainment, comprising fourteen songs and characters, including the wonderful 'double' of Mr. Sims Reeves in 'Come into the Garden, Maud,' and 'Geraldine.'"

Mr. and Mrs. German Reed were as yet only two-handed entertainers. "Mr. and Mrs. German Reed in their Illustrations 'Our Home Circuit' and 'Sea-side Studies,' introducing a variety of amusing and interesting sketches from real life with characteristic songs, at the Royal Gallery of Illustration, 14 Regent Street. Last nights of 'Sally Skeggs.'"

The Royal Gallery of Illustration, where I once saw a wonderful panorama of the "Overland Route" to India, and welcomed John Parry, Fanny Holland on her first appearance on any stage, Corney Grain and many more, has ceased to exist. Some of our cleverest writers and



musicians started their career at the Gallery, notably Arthur Sullivan, Fred Clay, Tom Robertson, Arthur Brenchley, B. C. Stephenson and W. S. Gilbert.

I remember distinctly that late in the year 1861 my chief at the War Office, Edward Stillwell, who was an enthusiastic playgoer, standing at his high desk, for he seldom wrote sitting, said to us, "Boys, if you want a good laugh I advise you to go at once to the Haymarket, to see a play called 'Our American Cousin.' I don't think much of the play; but there is an actor in it, called Edward Sothorn, who plays an eccentric character, Lord Dundreary, which is one of the very funniest things I have ever seen in my life. Buckstone acts a serious part, Asa Trenchard, which he cannot touch; but the interest of the play, such as it is, comes from Lord Dundreary, whose reading of a letter from his 'brother Sam' made me shriek with laughter. To my surprise I found the house half empty; so I advise you all to go at once, for I am half afraid the play will be withdrawn. A great pity if it is, for Sothorn is immense."

We boys were not slow in taking the advice of our respected chief, who knew what he was talking about. So at once we made up a party, and after a good dinner at the Café next to the Haymarket Theatre—now Epitau's—which used to be under the Opera Colonnade in Pall Mall, we found ourselves in the front row of the pit of the Haymarket Theatre.

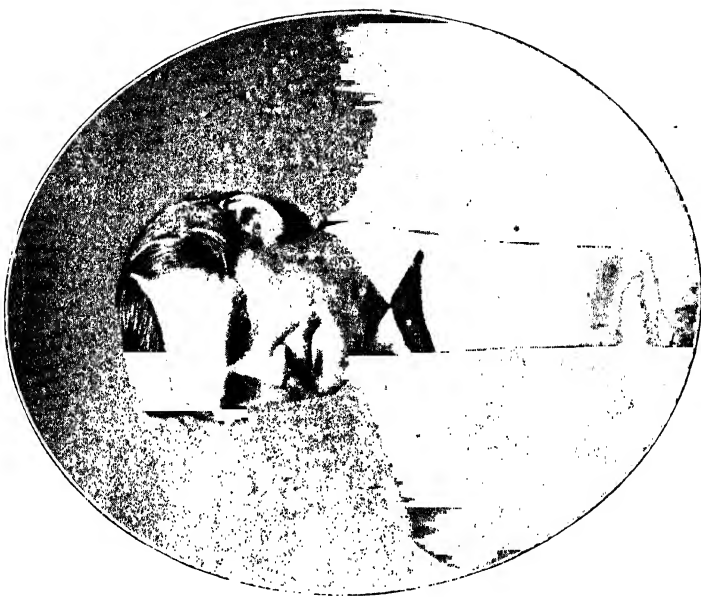
What a pit it was! Right out in the open covered by no circle or boxes, fairly on the floor of the house, and the best cheap seats in all London. The next morning we thanked Edward Stillwell heartily for his excellent advice. We also had found the theatre deplorably empty; but we certainly made a capital audience, for our



*Photo by*

E. A. SOUTHERN

*[Adolphus Beck]*



JOSEPH JEFFERSON



laughter was incessant. In the original cast were Buckstone, who was shockingly bad as Asa Trenchard, the character splendidly created in America by Jefferson; old Chippendale as Abel Murcott, the drunkard; Rogers, "with his brandy in the morning, brandy in the afternoon, brandy at night" in contemptuous reference to the tipsy clerk Murcott; "little Clark" as he was called, the solemn and sententious Braid, a walking dictionary; Mrs. Charles Young (Mrs. Hermann Vezin), Miss M. Oliver, Miss Henrietta Lindley and Miss Henrade. In after years the blonde beauty Georgina was played, and well played too, both by Caroline Hill and Ellen Terry.

Tom Taylor's play had an extraordinary history, even before it arrived in London. The best account of it is given by Joseph Jefferson himself, who, as I said before, created Asa Trenchard and made a great hit in the part. Before Sothorn arrived in London, he had played Lord Dundreary over 800 times in all parts of America. Mrs. John Wood was in one of the best American casts of "Our American Cousin," playing Florence Trenchard.

This is Joseph Jefferson's description of the play and the players, of which he was *facile princeps* :

"During the season of 1858-59 Miss Keene produced Tom Taylor's play of 'Our American Cousin,' and as its success was remarkable and some noteworthy occurrences took place in connection with it, a record of its career will perhaps be interesting. The play had been submitted by Mr. Tom Taylor's agent to another theatre; but the management failing to see anything striking in it, an adverse judgment was passed, and the comedy rejected. It was next offered to Laura Keene, who also thought but little of the play, which remained neglected upon her desk for some time; but it so

chanced that the business manager of the theatre, Mr. John Lutz, in turning over the leaves, fancied that he detected something in the play of a novel character. Here was a rough man, having no dramatic experience, but gifted with keen, practical sense, who discovered at a glance an effective play, the merits of which had escaped the vigilance of older, and, one would have supposed, better judges. He gave me the play to read. While it possessed but little literary merit, there was a fresh, breezy atmosphere about the characters and the story that attracted me very much. I saw, too, the chance of making a strong character of the leading part, and so I was quite selfish enough to recommend the play for production.

“The reading took place in the green-room, at which the ladies and gentlemen of the company were assembled, and many furtive glances were cast at Mr. Couldock and me as the strength of Abel Murcott and Asa Trenchard were revealed. Poor Sothern sat in the corner, looking quite disconsolate, fearing that there was nothing in the play that would suit him; and as the dismal lines of Dundreary were read he glanced over at me with a forlorn expression, as much as to say, ‘I am cast for that dreadful part!’ little dreaming that the character of the imbecile lord would turn out to be the stepping-stone of his fortune. The success of the play proved the turning-point in the career of three persons—Laura Keene, Sothern, and myself.

“As the treasury began to fill, Miss Keene was seen to twinkle with little brilliants; gradually her splendour increased, until at the end of three months she was ablaze with diamonds. Whether these were new additions to her impoverished stock of jewellery, or the return of old friends that had been parted with in

adversity—old friends generally leave us under these circumstances—I cannot say, but possibly the latter.

"The dramatic situation that struck me as the most important one in this play was the love scene in the opening of the last act. It was altogether fresh, original and perfectly natural; and I notice that in this important phase of dramatic composition authors are conspicuously weak.

"The love scenes in most all of our modern plays are badly constructed. In the English dramas they are sentimental and insipid, being filled with either flowery nonsense or an extravagance bordering upon burlesque; while the love scenes in the French plays are coarse and disgusting. Sardou has written but few female characters for whom one can feel the slightest respect. For instance, which one would a man select to be his mother were he compelled to make a choice? I think it would puzzle him. The love scenes between Alfred Evelyn and Clara Douglas in Bulwer's play of 'Money,' are stilted, unnatural and cold. The passages intended to display affection in the 'Lady of Lyons' are still further from 'imitating humanity,' and the speech of Claude to Pauline, beginning with

"'In a deep vale shut out by Alpine hills'

is so glaringly absurd that the audience invariably smile at the delivery of this soft extravagance.

"The greatest love scene that ever was or ever will be written is known as the balcony scene in 'Romeo and Juliet.' This is a perfect model, being full of the most exquisite humour.

"Natural love off the stage is almost invariably humorous, even comic—not to the lovers' mind; oh, no! 'Tis serious business to them, and that is just what

makes it so delightful to look at. The third party, when there is one, enjoys it highly. The principals do the most foolish things : the gentleman cannot make up his mind what to do with his hat or with his hands, the lady is awkward and shy, and the more they love each other the more comical they are. They say stupid things, and agree with each other before they have half done expressing an opinion.

“ It was the opportunity of developing this attitude of early love, particularly love at first sight, that attracted me to the ‘Cousin.’ Simple and trifling as it looks, Mr. Tom Taylor never drew a finer dramatic picture. The relation between the two characters was perfectly original. A shrewd, keen Yankee boy of twenty-five falls in love at first sight with a simple, loving, English dairymaid of eighteen. She innocently sits on the bench, close beside him ; he is fascinated, and draws closer to her ; she raises her eyes in innocent wonder at this, and he glides gently to the farthest end of the bench. He never tells her of his love, nor does she in the faintest manner suggest her affection for him ; and though they persistently talk of other things, you see plainly how deeply they are in love. He relates the story of his uncle’s death in America, and during this recital asks her permission to smoke a cigar. With apparent carelessness he takes out a paper, a will made in his favour by the old man, which document disinherits the girl ; with this he lights his cigar, thereby destroying his rights and resigning them to her.

“ The situation is strained certainly, but it is very effective, and an audience will always pardon a slight extravagance if it charms while it surprises them. The cast was an exceedingly strong one—Laura Keene as the refined, rural belle, and Sara Stevens as the modest, loving English

dairymaid. Both looked and acted the parts perfectly. The Abel Murcott of Mr. Couldock was a gem, and the extravagant force and humour of Mr. Sothern's Dundreary, the fame of which afterwards resounded all over the English speaking world, is too well known to need any comment, except perhaps to mention one or two matters connected with it of a curious nature.

" As I have before said, Sothern was much dejected at being compelled to play the part. He said he could do nothing with it, and certainly for the first two weeks it was a dull effort, and produced but little effect. So in despair he began to introduce extravagant business into his character,—skipping about the stage, stammering and sneezing, and, in short, doing all he could to attract and distract the attention of the audience. To the surprise of every one, himself included, these antics, intended by him to injure the character, were received by the audience with delight. He was a shrewd man as well as an effective actor, and he saw at a glance that accident had revealed to him a golden opportunity. He took advantage of it, and with cautious steps increased his speed, feeling the ground well under him as he proceeded. Before the first month was over he stood side by side with any other character in the play ; and at the end of the run he was, in my opinion, considerably in advance of us all.

" And his success in London, in the same character, fully attests, whatever may be said to the contrary, that as an extravagant, eccentric comedian in the modern range of comedy he was quite without a rival. His performance of Sam which I saw at the Haymarket Theatre in London was a still finer piece of acting than his Dundreary. It was equally strong, and had the



advantage of the other in not being overdrawn or extravagant.

“Miss Keene was undoubtedly delighted at Sothern’s rising fame. I think she found that I was becoming too strong to manage, and naturally felt that his success in rivalling mine would answer as a curb, and so enable her to drive me with more ease and a tighter rein. I don’t blame her for this, as an actor has a right to protect himself against the tyranny of a manager, the manager has an equal right to guard the discipline of the theatre ; and I have no doubt that I perhaps unconsciously exhibited a confidence in my growing strength that made her a little apprehensive lest I should try to manage her. In this she did me an injustice, which I am happy to say in after years the lady acknowledged. The first rupture between us came about somewhat in this way : ‘The Duchess’—as she was familiarly called by the actors, on the sly—had arranged some new business with Mr. Sothern, neglecting to inform me of it. I got the regular cue for entering, and as I came upon the stage I naturally, but unintentionally, interrupted their preconceived arrangements. This threw matters into a confusion which was quite apparent to the audience. Miss Keene, not stopping to consider that I had been kept in ignorance of her plan, and that the fault was hers and not mine, turned suddenly on me, and speaking out so loudly and plainly that most of the audience could hear her, said, ‘Go off the stage, Sir, till you get your cue for entering.’

“I was thunderstruck. There was a dead silence for a moment ; and in the same tone and with the same manner she had spoken to me, I replied :

“‘It has been given, and I will not retire.’

“We were both wrong. No actor has a right to show

up to the audience an accident or a fault committed on the stage, or intrude upon them one's personal misunderstandings. As two wrongs cannot make a right, it was clearly my duty to pass this by, so far as any public display of my temper was concerned, and then demand an explanation and an apology from her when the play was over. But

“ ‘Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious.  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment ?’

Besides, I felt that no explanation of hers could set me right with the audience, and I was smarting under the injustice of her making me appear responsible for her own fault.

“ When the curtain fell she was furious, and turning on me with flashing eyes and an imperious air discharged me then and there. I might leave now if I liked, and she would dismiss the audience rather than submit to such a public insult. I told her that if she considered my conduct an insult to her, that it was a confession that she had insulted me first, as my words and manner were but a reflection of her own. This sort of logic only made matters worse. So I informed her that I could not take a discharge given in the heat of temper, and would remain. The play proceeded, but she was singularly adroit, and by her manner in turning her back on me through an entire scene, and assuming an air of injured innocence, undoubtedly made the audience believe that I was a cruel wretch to insult her in so public a way. She had the advantage of me all through ; for when her temper was shown to me the play was proceeding, and I dare say that in the bustle and confusion of the scene very few of the audience could understand what she had done ; whereas when I retaliated

there had been a pause, and they got the full force of what I said.

“When an actor shows his temper upon the stage the audience feel insulted that they should be called upon to sympathise with his private quarrels. The actor is the loser, depend upon it.”

In conversation with Sothern he confirmed many of the accepted stories of the evolution of Lord Dundreary. He was so disgusted with the part as originally written by Tom Taylor not for an eccentric comedian, mark you, but for an old man, that he threw up the part in disgust, but accepted it, on reconsideration, on the condition that Laura Keene allowed him to do exactly what he liked with the part.

His first intention was to “guy” the whole thing; but, luckily, better counsels—probably those of his charming and affectionate wife—prevailed, since Lord Dundreary was the stepping-stone to fame and fortune; but when he began to work up the character he found that by patience and perseverance something might be made of Lord Dundreary. It was not the work of a single night, but the result of weeks and weeks of additions and alterations. Brother Sam’s letter was not introduced until some weeks after the play was produced.

Sothern has often told me that Lord Dundreary was a hotchpotch of caricatures of various men he had known, stories he had heard, jokes he had read; but the basis of it all was the comical negro of everyday life. Translate the Dundrearyisms in Sothern’s version, for he wrote the whole of the part of Dundreary—of course to the disgust of Tom Taylor—and you will find the American bell-boy and waiter and the corner-

man of the Negro Minstrels. Mr. Bones was the root idea of Lord Dundreary. The long Dundreary frock coat in which Sothern first played the part was borrowed from his friend Dion Boucicault, and is now in possession of Sothern's clever son Edward. Sothern confirmed also the story of the Dundreary "hop." One very cold day he was hopping about at the back of the stage at rehearsal to keep himself warm, and making his comrades roar with laughter, when Laura Keane, in her imperious way, said, "I suppose you intend to introduce that nonsense into Dundreary."

"I thought of doing so," said Sothern. And he did.

I am so often asked what the "Brother Sam" speech in Lord Dundreary was like, what was the special humour of it, and how it came in due course to captivate the whole of fun-loving London, that I am tempted to give it *in extenso*. I am able to do so, thanks to my old friend, Edgar Pemberton, a Sothern enthusiast, who has preserved the best parts of Sothern's additions to Tom Taylor's original text, innocent of the Dundreary as he is known to stage history. In addition to the Brother Sam letter, I am able to quote some of the most ludicrous scenes in which Sothern was concerned. But I must warn the young and sceptical playgoer that the mere words quoted give no idea of the actor's inimitable manner; his bland and hopeless stupidity, mingled with an astonishing shrewdness and common-sense; his well-bred air, combined with a vacant gaze; his apparently crassness of intellect, chased away by the downy keenness of the "sharp." Forty years have passed away since Lord Dundreary electrified the town. But I see the traces of him yet in the golden youth of to-day. He does not wear a frock coat down to his heels or long weeping whiskers, or pegtop shepherd's

plaid trousers, or an eyeglass, but he has the exact Dundreary mixture of semi-stupidity, cuteness and cupidity exhibited by Lord Dundreary in 1860. If such a part were ever written again and brought up to date, it would be acted by Charles Hawtrey, who understands to a button and a pause, a hesitation and a glance, the Lord Dundreary of 1899.

Here, then, is Brother Sam's letter, read and acted by Sothern, in "Our American Cousin," when I was a boy. The letter from Sam (the immortal Sam who never had a "uel"), was always the great success of the evening, and which, delivered as it was, used to make people absolutely sore with laughing. The stage directions are essential in order to understand the letter.

"(Before opening letter, read 'N.B.' outside it.) 'N.B.—If you don't get this letter, write and let me know.' That fella's an ass, whoever he is!

"(Opens letter, taking care he holds it upside down.) I don't know any fella in America except Sam; of course I know Sam, because Sam's my brother. Every fella knows his own brother. Sam and I used to be boys when we were lads, both of us. We were always together. People used to say, 'Birds of a feather — what is it birds of a feather do?—oh, 'Birds of a feather gather no moss!' That's ridiculous, that is! The idea of a lot of birds picking up moss! Oh, no; it's the early bird that knows its own father. That's worse than the other. No bird can know its own father. If he told the truth, he'd say he was even in a fog about his own mother. I've got it, it's the wise child that gets the worms! Oh, that's worse than any of them! No parent would allow his child to get a lot of worms like that! Besides, the whole proverb's nonsense from beginning



EDWARD ASKEW SOTHERN.  
As Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin."



to end. Birds of a feather flock together, yes, that's it. As if a whole flock of birds would have only one feather! They'd all catch cold. Besides, there's only one of those birds could have that feather, and that fella would fly all on one side. That's one of those things no fella can find out. Besides, fancy any bird being such a d—d fool as to go into a corner and flock all by himself. Ah, that's one of those things no fella can find out. (Looks at letter.) Whoever it's from he's written it upside down. Oh, no, I've got it upside down. I knew some fella was upside down. (Laughs.) Yes, this is from Sam; I always know Sam's handwriting when I see his name on the other side. 'America.' Well, I'm glad he's sent me his address. 'My dear brother.' Sam always calls me brother, because neither of us have got any sisters.

"I am afraid that my last letter miscarried, as I was in such a hurry for the post that I forgot to put any direction on the envelope.' Then I suppose that's the reason I never got it; but who could have got it? The only fella that could have got that letter is some fella without a name. And how on earth could he get it? The postman couldn't go about asking every fella he met if he'd got no name.

"Sam's an ass. 'I find out now' (I wonder what he's found out now) 'that I was changed at my birth.' Now, what d—d nonsense that is! Why didn't he find it out before? 'My old nurse turns out to be my mother.' What rubbish! Then, if that's true, all I can say is, Sam's not my brother, and if he's not my brother, who the devil am I? Let's see, now. Stop a minute (pointing to forefinger of left hand). That's Sam's mother, and that's (the thumb), Sam's nurse. Sam's nurse is only half the size of his mother. Well,



that's *my* mother. (Points to second finger on left hand. He finds he can't get that finger to stand up like the rest—the thumb and forefinger—as he closes the third and little finger.) I can't get my mother to stand up. Well, that's my mother (holds up forefinger of right hand; in the meantime he has opened all the fingers of the left hand). Hullo, here's a lot of other fellas' mothers! Well, as near as I can make out, Sam has left me no mother at all. Then the point is, who's my father? Oh, that's a thing no fella can find out.

“Oh, here's a P.S. ‘By the by, what do you think of the following riddle? If fourteen dogs with three legs each catch forty-eight rabbits with seventy-six legs in twenty-five minutes, how many legs must twenty-four rabbits have to get away from ninety-three dogs with two legs each in half an hour?’

“Here's another P.S. ‘You will be glad to know that I have purchased a large estate somewhere or other on the banks of the Mississippi. Send me the purchase money. The enclosed pill-box contains a sample of the soil!’”

I always thought Dundreary's story to Georgina was as funny when told by Sothern, as the recital of the famous letter.

“When Sam was a lad he was merely a baby—born, and everything like that, of course. He had a bald head, too, and was greatly annoyed about it—I don't mean annoyed about being bald, but about being born at all. What I mean is—he put it this way—there he was, and, of course, it was too late to alter the position. There was another fellow—an old chum of Sam's—and he was born, too—and he had a bald head, too. There was a good deal of jealousy about that This fellow

was a baby about Sam's age. There was a good deal of bother about that.

"His mother asked my opinion about it; but I told her I didn't want to get mixed up in family matters. Well, that fellow died, and made himself very comfortable in that sort of way—and his cousin by another fellow's godmother married a girl that I was going to marry—only I didn't get up, or something like that—my man didn't call me—or something of that sort—so she married this other fellow—a very nice fellow he was, and I wanted to do him a good turn; and there it was. They were happy, and all that—splendid mother-in-law and a large family—about fourteen children—made things very pleasant like that—nearly all of them twins—and they made me godfather to about a dozen of them.

"The wife was a very nice woman, with her nose a little on one side—a lovely girl, though. *His* nose was a little on one side, too; so it made everything pleasant like that. All the children's noses were on one side, too. They were what you might call south-south-west noses. Fourteen noses looked very pleasant like that. Whenever I met them in the park it always struck me that if my fool of a man had only called me that morning, and I had married their mother—I mean, if I'd been their father—it was quite on the cards that their noses might have been a little——. But that's nothing to do with the anecdote.

"Well, one day he went for a stroll with his mother-in-law—a woman he hated like poison—and they got shipwrecked—had a very jolly time of it—lived on a raft for about a fortnight—lived on anything they could pick up—oysters, sardines—I don't exactly know what—until at last they had to eat each other. They used

to toss up who they should eat first—and he was a very lucky fellow; and when he was left alone with his mother-in-law, he tied her to the raft—legs dangling in the water, and everything pleasant like that. Then he stuck a penknife in his mother-in-law, and cut her up in slices, and ate her. He told me that he enjoyed the old woman very much. He was a splendid fellow—full of humour—and full of mother-in-law, too.”

And again, another scene between Dundreary and Georgina. When Ellen Terry played Georgina she was a young girl of enchanting loveliness. She was the ideal of every pre-Raffaelite painter, and had hair as de Musset says, “*comme le blé*.” I always sympathised with Dundreary when he, within whispering distance of Ellen Terry’s harvest-coloured hair, said, “It makes a fellow feel awkward when he’s talking to the back of a person’s head.”

From the scenes between Dundreary and Georgina one may almost quote at random.

“Dun. : It’s a pretty flower—if it were another colour. One fellow likes one colour, and another fellow likes another colour. Come, you know what I mean? (Georgina shakes her head.) Yes, you do. I don’t—but you do. I mean it’s one of those things that grows out of a flower-pot—roots—mud—and all that sort of thing. Oh, talking of mud reminds me. It’s rather awkward for one fellow to say to another fellow—the fact is, I’ve made up my mind to propose to some fellow or other, and it struck me I might as well propose to you as anybody else. (Georgina turns slightly away from him.) I mean sooner, of course. I only said that because I was nervous. Any fellow naturally does feel nervous when he knows he’s going to make an ass

of himself. Talking about asses, I've been a bachelor ever since I've been so high, and I've got rather tired of that sort of thing; and it struck me if you'll be kind enough to marry me, I shall be very much obliged to you.

"Of course, if you don't see the matter in the same light, and fancy you'd rather not—why, I don't care a rap about it! (She turns aside, looking amazed.) I've got it all mixed up, somehow or other. You see, the fact is—hem—hem! (Pause.) It makes a fellow feel awkward when he's talking to the back of a person's head. (She faces him.) Thank you, that's better: you'll find me a very nice fellow—at least, I think so—that is, what I mean is, that most fellows think me a nice fellow—two fellows out of three would think me a nice fellow—and the other fellow—the third fellow—well, that fellow would be an ass.

"I'm very good-tempered, too; that's a great point, isn't it? You look as if you'd got a good temper; but then, of course, we know that many a girl looks as if she'd got a good temper before she's married—but after she's married, sometimes, a fellow finds out her temper's not exactly what he fancied. (He laughs suddenly.) I'm making a devil of a mess of it! I really think we should be very happy. I'm a very domesticated fellow—fond of tea—smoking in bed—and all that sort of thing. I merely name that because it gives you an insight into a fellow's character.

"You'll find me a very easy fellow to get along with; and after we've been married two or three weeks, if you don't like me you can go back again to your mother."

The elder Sothern, like so many brilliant eccentric actors and excellent comedians I have known before and

seen since, had an *idée fixe* that he was a romantic actor. He was a born humourist, but he posed for sentiment. As handsome a man as ever stood on the stage, a splendid horseman, an admirable *raconteur*, a charming companion, a practical joker whose deeds and misdeeds in this dangerous direction would fill a volume, he had not the voice, the touch, the tone or the persuasiveness requisite for a Romeo, a Ruy Blas, or a Lagardère ("Duke's Motto").

He could burlesque tragic passion in "David Garrick" splendidly, but his love scene that ends the play acted as a soporific on many of us. When we told him that nothing could well be better in eccentric art than his Dundreary, his Brother Sam, and his Hugh de Brass, he would smile, and then rush off to Westland Marston, and order still another version of Octave Feuillet's "Romance of a Poor Young Man," in which of course he made a ludicrous failure.

Many an English actor before and since has had the same bee in his bonnet, the same spider on his ceiling. They all want to be Romeos when they are born Mercutios. Laertes is perpetually essaying Hamlet.

It is much the same thing in modern France. In the old golden days at the Théâtre Français I do not think that such superb actors as Bressant or Delaunay ever desired to desert the home of comedy; but I for one am sorry that such an actor as Coquelin was ever patted on the back for his essays in romance.

It may be my bad taste, but I thought very little of his Cyrano de Bergerac. Clever, of course, as everything must be that Coquelin does; but it was not the Cyrano of the poet author, and never could be. Give me Coquelin as Don Cæsar; in Molière everywhere; as Thouvenin in "Dénise," and in all his comedy creations; but he has

not the voice; the manner or the style for poetic lovers. This is no new theory of mine. Many a long year ago I said exactly the same thing of the elder Sothern, and it was printed in the London *Figaro*. There are very few words of the following judicial summing up that I should desire to recall :—

"It surely would not be unfair to say that Mr. Sothern went up like a rocket. I am not altogether prepared to say that he has come down like the stick ; but I somehow hardly think that the position of this actor is so determined as many people make out, or his popularity so great as the posters would lead us to imagine.

"Mr. Sothern is not known among the English public as a particularly great actor, or a finished artist, or as a genius, or as a man of superlative talent ; but as Lord Dundreary, he was first admired ; as Lord Dundreary, he is still very popular ; and, struggle as Mr. Sothern will, he does not seem able to free himself from the fetters of Dundrearydom. Mr. Sothern's extraordinary success in this particular character no doubt makes him feel capable of better things ; and, at any rate, it is quite clear that he wishes to shake off for a while the obstinate attentions of this erratic nobleman.

"I acknowledge, with all reverence and with something like enthusiasm, the rare humour of the actor who could create such a character or rather caricature, and carry out the idea so excellently to the end. But there were other points to be admired.

"Mr. Sothern's 'business,' always good, was in this creation brought to absolute perfection. It is quite clear that the mechanical portion of his art is very dear to Mr. Sothern ; and few actors polish up a part so well, or

round it off so completely. The history of 'Our American Cousin' must be well enough known in this country. I suppose every one is aware that in America Asa Trenchard as acted by Joseph Jefferson was the great character; and when Mr. Sothern came to this country, and to the Haymarket, he came with the reputation of being a painstaking and industrious artist, but certainly not as one who would be likely to 'set the Thames on fire.'

"It must be equally well known that for very many weeks 'Our American Cousin,' even with Mr. Sothern as Dundreary, was played at the Haymarket to comparatively empty benches. Every one went to see Mr. Buckstone as Asa Trenchard and came away praising Mr. Sothern as Dundreary. I remember well sitting, one of about fifty, in the enormous Haymarket pit soon after the play was produced. Mr. Sothern's name had hardly been mentioned by the press, and to me it was perfectly unfamiliar.

"But I was wonderfully struck with the Lord Dundreary. 'Who is this man?' I asked; and then of course talking of theatrical matters I told every one I came across. Many more in these empty houses, must have done the same; for in due time, without any puffing whatever, and solely on account of the extraordinary performance, Mr. Sothern and Lord Dundreary began to be talked about, and the actor obtained that best of all advertisements—the hearty approbation of every soul who visited the theatre. The success of Mr. Sothern in this country made the Americans open their eyes wide with astonishment. They had thrown away the pearl, and England had obtained it by the merest accident in the world.

"As a specimen of rare, humorous acting, the Brother Sam was, in my humble opinion, even preferable to

the Lord Dundreary. This is the kind of thing Mr. Sothern can do to perfection. He has a rare notion of fun. He is dry, incisive and excellent. He never misses a point; and it is astonishing to me that, with all his knowledge of business and his undoubted humour, he should not give us more of his extravagant caricature acting, attempt some more strong character parts, and leave the young lovers alone. The public somehow altogether missed the fun of 'The Woman in Mauve'; but in this satirical play Mr. Sothern was at his very best. Again, what can be better than his Hugh de Brass in 'A Regular Fix'?

"In 'David Garrick' who can help admiring the mock-heroic scenes, all the play-acting in fact? But when Mr. Sothern is merely an earnest lover, what can be more sombre than his love-making, or more melancholy than his pathos? Mr. Sothern has a decided *métier*, but he blindly devotes himself to a line of character he cannot touch. He is all at sea as a lover, young or middle-aged. He should play Glavis, and he attempts Claude Melnotte. Instead of Mercutio he takes Romeo. When he should be telling his idea of a funny character to a sharp dramatic author, he gets a poetical writer to translate French love dramas which require youth, go, fire, and the kind of love-making which no actor on the English stage understands.

"There was a Cambridge University play 'A Lesson for Life,' written by Mr. Tom Taylor, in which Mr. Sothern played a young undergraduate. Many years before it was produced at the Haymarket, I saw some amateurs play it at the St. James's, and Mr. Sothern could no more hold a candle to Mr. Weguelin than I can to Hazlitt or Charles Lamb. Mr. Sothern's undergraduate hero was—not to put too



fine a point upon it—a lamentable failure, and in this particular play young Mr. Kendal played Mr. Sothern right out of the theatre. The great star was literally nowhere. And this kind of thing I have seen over and over again when Mr. Sothern has persisted in playing the lover.

“Mr. Sothern’s love-making is not ludicrous, as is the case with many actors I could mention. It is merely dull, dismal, sombre, awful, tedious, and as heavy as the weightiest of lead. Some infatuated ladies, who do not know what they are talking about—fascinated by Mr. Sothern’s manly appearance and fine figure—have evidently told him, or caused it to be known, that in their opinion ‘Mr. Sothern is such a gentleman, and can make love so beautifully!’

“I have seen Delaunay and Fechter, and don’t think he can. They have also told him, or caused it to be known, that Mr. Sothern dresses so perfectly. I have studied Pall Mall, and do not think he does. Mr. Sothern’s clothes fit him well, but he is invariably over-dressed. When a man is well dressed not an article of his dress should strike the eye. Mr. Sothern’s neckties are startling. But these are minor matters. I could forget the astounding coats, the awful cravats, the velvet cuffs and all the rest of the elegant (I think that is the feminine word) and down-the-road attire. I could pardon all the Sothernian love-making which I have suffered for my sins, if this clever and capable actor would stick to his last, and give us some more of his inimitable eccentric acting.”

Sothern was one of those delightful spirits it has been a delight to know, to meet, and to criticise. He was destined, of course, for the stage; but the stage, with its

allurements and temptations, spoiled him, as it has spoiled many another good fellow. He had a fine, free, frank, loveable nature. But the stage life made him a little selfish, and whilst he won many hearts he probably broke more. One thing must be said to his credit.

Edward Askew Sothern was not a bit of a snob; he met the best people in the land, but he cringed, fawned and toadied, to no one; and, to tell the truth, society liked him all the better for it. His end came very suddenly. Hospitable, generous, reckless, he would have given you gold to eat if you had cared to take it, with his five-shilling cigars which were never to be smoked out, but just one inch consumed, and then thrown away. And so he wrecked a splendid constitution. He faded out, and the world of laughter and good fellowship knew poor Ned Sothern no more. It was his art to charm and to fascinate women. And he left that art behind him, a hereditary gift, bestowed on his handsome sons, Lytton, Edward, and Sam!

## CHAPTER XII

### “HOW I BECAME A DRAMATIC CRITIC”

THIS question has been put to me so frequently, that I propose to answer, and illustrate it, in some detail. I have already recorded my youthful impressions, and the fascination that the theatre had over me, and how I was unconsciously drawn to the pit and the gallery; and I have elsewhere insisted that never at any time had the stage as a profession any attraction to me whatsoever. Whilst many of my companions were longing to be actors and actresses, to dress up and paint their faces, my ambition was ever to sit on the critical bench, and to write down as well as I could the impressions that each play and performance made on my mind.

Possibly, indeed, local environment may have had something to do with it; but, strange to say, that in the very two places where character is said to be first formed,—home and school,—I was least understood. My father was a writer on a variety of subjects and a very brilliant journalist in his day; but that very fact retarded my progress and checked my ambition. He was naturally a king in his own country, regarded as an oracle on all matters; and if any of his sons had shown the slightest desire or ambition to follow in his footsteps, a satirical snubbing would have been the result. Consequently,

my first ambitious efforts to turn such moderate talent as I had to account were concealed from every one at home, father, brothers, sisters, everybody save one—my dear mother, who was sworn to secrecy and looked upon my wild schemes more in sorrow than in anger ; for she knew—none better—the pain that would be in store for me, and she feared that the slightest shock to so sensitive a nature would stifle ambition altogether.

I think that the first wild thing I did in my life without consulting a human being, was to write to the Secretary of the Great Western Railway Literary Society, an excellent institution on the Birkbeck and Polytechnic plan for keeping young men out of frivolous amusement, and making them "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." The object of my letter was to know if I could be of any service to the society in giving before their members "A Reading from the Poets." This was early in the year 1862, before I came of age. I received a very courteous letter from Mr. Rennie, the amiable secretary of the Institute, an old and experienced playgoer, with whom I formed a very sincere and long friendship. In his rooms in John Street, Adelphi, I met some very celebrated actors of the old school, among them the famous John Cooper, a pompous learned man, but, as I have often heard, a somewhat indifferent actor.

The active and enterprising Rennie accepted my offer for the reading ; whereupon, with the reckless impudence of youth, I made my first appearance on any stage or platform in the large board room of the Great Western Railway, with a desk in front of me, a pile of books, and the customary glass and bottle of water. I was well versed in lectures and entertainments of all kinds, having sat under, at the Marlborough Town Hall, such brilliant

elocutionists as George Dawson, and applauded, as only boys can, the funny little father of George and Weedon Grossmith, an inimitable lecturer, whose skit on other serious lecturers, called "The Dark Races," tickled us immensely.

In fact, George Grossmith the elder, the chief reporter at Bow Street, to which post "G. G." succeeded at his father's death, taught the popular George Grossmith the younger how to entertain. He was a genial, kind-hearted, clever little gentleman, with a twinkle in his eyes and a fund of anecdote at his command. He always reminded me of Mr. Pickwick.

Whenever in London, I haunted literary institutions of every kind, particularly when the Rev. J. C. M. Bellew, the father of our Kyrle Bellew, gave readings from the poets. He was one of the finest readers I ever heard. He had a splendid appearance, with a mane—there is no other word for it—of silky white hair, a fine expression and a glorious voice. He ought to have been an actor, but, as it turned out, he was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England, and died a Catholic.

The Rev. John C. Montesquieu Bellew was a very picturesque London character. He had been a chaplain in India, where, I think, his eldest son, Kyrle Bellew, the actor, was born, and, being extremely handsome, he was the idol of the ladies both in India and England. When I first knew Bellew—a very much misunderstood man, who suffered, as all lady-killers invariably do, from the little jealousies and the underwriting of men who cannot kill, and women who won't be killed—he was the Vicar of St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, the living now held by Canon Duckworth.

The ladies of St. John's Wood idolised Bellew. He was a scholar, a poet, and an orator. His sermons

were even more ornate than those of Dean Farrar, at the time that he, as a very young man, used to delight us boys, sitting under him in the chapel at Marlborough, long before he was headmaster, in the days when he had just come, full of honours and prize poems, from Cambridge, and always joined us in our games of football and cricket.

Yes, both Farrar and Bellew preached Ruskinese, and the dear women—bless them!—loved poetical sermons. Imagine a man with a full round face, rather dark in complexion, suggesting West Indian blood, a fine form, bright intelligent eyes, covered with shaggy black eyebrows, and above this young face a marvellous head of hair, white as silver, and of the texture of spun silk. When Bellew was not spiritually advising the ladies of Hamilton Terrace and its vicinity, he was dabbling in materialism, and coquetting with hypnotism, anticipating the game of "willing," and reading from the poets at all the best literary institutions in London, out of London, and in the country, when he could get away. He was a magnificent elocutionist, and taught people to believe in and admire Tennyson, Browning, and Hood. But, strange to say, one of his favourite authors was the long neglected Crabbe.

A picture arises before my mind. There is a small island, overshadowed by trees, in the middle of the river, between Orkney Cottage, Maidenhead, which was once my father's property, close by the railway bridge, where I spent my boyhood's days, and "The Fisheries," then owned by the Lewises, over the way on the Berkshire side of the river. "The Fisheries" one summer was taken by Bellew, and the St. John's Wood congregation naturally came down to see

him, as they could not exist very long without their poetical pastor. So they punted him over to the grassy island, where I have enjoyed many a siesta on sultry afternoons, and propped him up on scarlet cushions that formed a wonderful background for his flowing and curly white hair, and the adoring women attitudinised and sprawled around him, listening to his grand voice declaiming Tennyson's "Guinevere," or Owen Meredith's "Portrait." Bellew's fine vocal organ could have been heard as far down the river as Bray, and the very swans seemed to be attracted by it. I assure you that the scene was quite Eastern, with a touch of Buddhism and Siddartha in it.

Some unkind people thought it was posing, but I afterwards discovered what a good fellow the "poseur" was. Between ourselves, I don't think that my father, who was a parson also, liked it at all. But then he considered that he, being the owner of Orkney Cottage, had a kind of claim to the river island on which the St. John's Wood congregation had "squatted," and on which several of our pet dogs are buried. So, after all, it might have been professional jealousy.

When Bellew left St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, he became the proprietor of Bedford Chapel, and might have stood for Thackeray's picture of the Rev. Honeyman. Here, on New Year's Eve, he gave one of the most sensational and dramatic services in all London. It was a kind of watch-night service, after the fashion of the Wesleyans. He delivered a sort of dramatic lecture, rather than a sermon, warning the congregation that they were getting nearer and nearer to twelve o'clock, another old year fading away, and so on. There he stood in the pulpit, watch in hand, with his

flowing head of silver hair, surmounting a snowy white surplice, brightened up with a pale blue stole, and a crimson Oxford hood.

The women used to come out of the chapel sobbing; and the popular preacher would then go off to spend the early hours of the New Year with his friends, Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, or Edward Stillwell, who was, with his charming family, devotedly attached to him. Soon after this, Bellew became a Catholic, and died, as he ever was, a good man and a true friend.

One of the last acts of this curious character was to invent a new entertainment, on which he prided himself. He hired St. George's Hall, and read the play of "Hamlet" in the orchestra, whilst behind him a series of dummy performers acted all the scenes in dumb show without uttering a word. In fact, they illustrated the recital or reading. I regret to say the experiment though well-intentioned, was a dreadful failure. Bellew ought to have been an actor, not a clergyman.

Conceive then the "cheek,"—schoolboys used the word then as they do to-day—of a lad of scarcely over twenty standing at the Great Western Literary Society, at the same desk where in a few days perhaps would stand George Dawson, Grossmith and Bellew!

But I did, and here is the programme of the entertainment:—

#### GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY LITERARY SOCIETY.

On Thursday, 6th February, 1862,

CLEMENT SCOTT, Esq.,

has kindly consented to give An Evening with the Poets.

##### PART I.

Speech of King Arthur ("Guinevere") . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>
Napoleon and the Sailor . . . . .	<i>Campbell.</i>
The Changeling . . . . .	<i>Lowell.</i>
Norfolk Tragedy ("Ingoldsby Legends") . . . . .	<i>Barham</i>
Song of the Shirt . . . . .	<i>Hood.</i>



## PART II.

Brutus and Cassius ("Julius Cæsar") . . . . .	<i>Shakespeare.</i>
Nelly Gray, Sally Brown . . . . .	<i>Hood.</i>
Dora . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>
Battle of Naseby . . . . .	<i>Macaulay.</i>
Burial of Sir John Moore . . . . .	<i>Wolfe.</i>

Each member will be entitled to a free admission, together with the privilege of introducing a lady.

The entertainment will commence at eight p.m.

Entrance to the Rooms, first door from the Bishop's Road.

I shrewdly suspect I was a dreadful failure, except perhaps in Tennyson's pathetic poem of "Dora." At any rate, I was encouraged to go on by friend Rennie and a courteous old gentleman, Mr. Owen, a faithful servant of the Company, who knew all my relatives at Bristol. Reading aloud had always been a passion of mine. At Marlborough I was "reader-in-chief" in class-rooms, studies, and in the convalescent wards of the "sick room," where a plentiful supply of Dickens, "Pickwick" in chief, Frank Smedley (Lewis Arundel), Matthew Arnold, and Tennyson, *passim*, seemed to cure better than the nostrums of faithful Dr. Fergus, or the nursing of "Mother Tebbutt," who appeared to me to be a gloriously rotund amalgam of Mrs. Gamp, Betsy Prig, and Mrs. Harris. Nursing was not a fine art in those days.

However, my Great Western experiment was so far successful that I secretly planned out a tour of my own as a lecturer or reader, to be paid for this time, railway, hotel expenses, and an honorarium. I did not dare to go down to my old school Marlborough, but hovered about the favourite precincts, giving one lecture at Hungerford in the Town Hall, and another at Swindon in a huge circular building that belonged to the Mechanics' Institute.

The entertainment at Swinford in 1862 consisted of—

PART I.

Dora . . . . .	<i>Alfred Tennyson.</i>
Bridge of Sighs . . . . .	<i>Thomas Hood.</i>
Changeling . . . . .	<i>Lowell.</i>
King of Brentford . . . . .	<i>Thackeray.</i>
Battle of Ivry . . . . .	<i>Macaulay.</i>
Norfolk Tragedy . . . . .	<i>Barham.</i>
May Queen . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>

PART II.

Selections from "Hamlet" . . . . .	<i>Shakespeare.</i>
Charge of the Light Brigade . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>
Song of the Shirt . . . . .	<i>Hood.</i>
Ride from Aix to Ghent . . . . .	<i>Browning.</i>
Clare Vere de Vere . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>
Margate Sands . . . . .	<i>Barham (Ingoldsby).</i>
Dedication to Idylls of the King . . . . .	<i>Tennyson.</i>

So, you see, I did not shirk hard work, and could not be accused of any want of "cruel-hearted ambition"—some people might call it by another name—before I came to manhood's age of twenty-one.

On reflection, I think that the two strongest influences that made me ambitious enough to become a dramatic critic were first my good luck in being elected a member of the Arundel Club—the old Arundel Club in Salisbury Street, Strand—where I met the flower of Bohemia Land in those days, Bohemian authors, Bohemian actors, Bohemian barristers, artists, men of science, solicitors—all the very "pick of the basket." Secondly, my great luck in forming a firm friendship with Tom Hood, the son of the great poet, Thomas Hood, who sat opposite to me at the same desk at the War Office for many years, and encouraged a youngster to work, and work hard, if ever young man did.

Human nature is of course human nature; but I honestly do not think that young writers, young

journalists, young critics, young beginners were so jealous of one another then as they seem to be to-day; but probably the competition was not so great then as it is now. The experience we have gained, after a long fight and an arduous struggle to-day, causes heartburning, because the experience cannot be gained by others without the hard work and the struggle. At any rate we rolled logs for one another in the early sixties. We were building our new city, and we certainly helped one another with all our hearts and with desperate endeavour.

Poor Tom Hood had to work hard for his living. When the author of "The Song of the Shirt" and the "Bridge of Sighs" died, Tom Hood and his sister, Mrs. Frances Freeling Broderip, a charming writer, were left very badly off indeed. Sir William and Lady Molesworth and other generous people got up a subscription for Thomas Hood's children, and secured for them £50 a year for life out of the Civil List Pensions. With the assistance of many friends and admirers of his poet father, Tom Hood was sent up to Pembroke College, Oxford. He was young, extremely handsome, attractive, and with a very lovable nature, and I suppose he "out-ran the constable." At any rate, he had to start afresh with his life pension of £50 and a temporary clerkship in the War Office, Pall Mall, laden with Oxford debts.

He was very brave; turned night into day; and became a "slave of the lamp." But still he found time, a very gentle and graceful poet himself, to correct and alter my youthful verses, to teach me how to scan and rhyme, and gave me heart by printing what I had written in *Fun* and *Saturday Night*, and allowing me to join the band of literary brothers who for several

years in succession wrote a budget of Christmas stories together for Warne, Routledge, or Groombridge.

But all this time my ambition was to become a dramatic critic.

This was too much for Tom Hood: he fairly laughed at me, and asked me, to my chagrin, what on earth I knew about the stage?

I was bound to confess very little indeed.

Still my ambition did not die.

I fear that my very first effort to become a dramatic critic ended in dismal failure. An advertisement appeared in one of the papers for a journalist, who was to combine the duties of dramatic critic and leader writer for an important paper—at least, that was what the announcement said. I lost no time, and at once made my way to a small court just before you came to old Temple Bar, on the right-hand side going to the City. I remember this court well; it was a dingy, apparently deserted, cul-de-sac, guarded by an iron swing gate.

Luckily for me, as I then thought, the advertiser was at home. I was so anxious to secure the coveted appointment, that I imagined long before I could arrive at Temple Bar I should find the deserted court filled to its utmost limits with hungry journalists. I was the only one. I was duly introduced to a Mr. Fergusson, who was acting on behalf of a very smart gentleman—Mr. Spry—who had embarked on a splendid literary enterprise, which was to be called the "Victoria Press." It had nothing of course to do with the Victoria Press of my dear lamented friend, Emily Faithfull, who, encouraged directly by her Majesty the Queen, was the actual pioneer of the Women's Help Movement.

Having ascertained that I was in one of the best

Government offices, and that I was in receipt of a sufficient salary paid quarterly, Mr. Fergusson, who was all politeness and amiability, told me that my claims would be considered with those of others; that he would consult his principal, Mr. Spry, and that he would communicate with me again. He then bowed me out, and I departed, back through the iron gate, to Pall Mall.

A few days afterwards I was asked to call again, and, to my intense joy, I was told by Mr. Fergusson that I had been appointed dramatic critic and special writer for the "Victoria Press," for the then extraordinary salary of £5 a week. I only got £2 a week when I started real work on a responsible paper later on. Naturally, I thought my fortune was made. Fame and wealth awaited me. What could man desire more on earth?

When I reached home, elated as I was, I told my father the good news, whilst I was hunting in his library for books that would tell me something about the drama from "Gammer Gurton's Needle" and Prynne's "Histriomastix" to the days of Macready. My father did not say anything. He simply smiled, and, as I thought, with unnecessary sarcasm, begged that I would show him my salary directly it was paid. I sat at a desk in the office in Pall Mall, opposite my dear old chum Tom Hood, who had just started a weekly periodical called *Saturday Night*, to which I had contributed with the utmost confidence ridiculous reviews, and infantile essays discussing all the problems of life. Of course I communicated the all-important information to Tom Hood. He, like my father, smiled; but, he added with that beautiful smile of his as he jerked his gold eyeglass from his eye, "Do you know anything about the drama?"

I thought it rather an unkind remark, and I was

inclined to be restive and fire up, for it was unfortunately too true that I was absolutely ignorant of the art. However, I contented myself with the obvious retort that I supposed I could learn, coupled with such platitudes as "Rome was not built in a day," &c. Undaunted, I went steadily to work.

I received no tickets for the theatre, and I was compelled to pay for admission out of my own pocket. But, dear me ! what did a few shillings matter when I was in receipt of the stupendous salary of £5 a week and was making a name ?

Weeks and weeks slipped away, but still no allusion was made by Mr. Fergusson to the question of salary. Both he and Spry professed themselves delighted with my work, and they encouraged me to do more and more for the "*Victoria Press*," which did not, however, appear to be a very popular periodical. I could find it nowhere. At last I revolted, like the immortal spendthrifts, who, sitting disconsolate at Henry Mayhew's house in Berners Street, suddenly threw up the window, and all screamed into the street, "Cash must be had." So I wrote to my principals, and suggested that as I had paid for all my seats, expenses, and programmes, a cheque would be very convenient. I was at once sent for to the dingy court off Fleet Street, expecting to return burdened with gold, but I was met by Mr. Fergusson with a very long face !

The "*Victoria Press*" was in difficulties ; the printers were becoming clamorous, and this brilliant little journal would have to be stopped unless some philanthropic person would advance the paltry sum of £20. Unluckily for me, I had just received my quarter's salary ; and, persuaded by Fergusson, who flattered me on my success as a journalist, which would be certainly nipped

in the night the "Victoria Press" died an untimely death, I lent the firm the sum of £20, leaving myself comparatively penniless for the next quarter. Alas, at the end of that fatal week I could not find the "Victoria Press" anywhere. I hurried off for explanations from my editor and proprietor. The iron gate of the dingy court was open, but the office door was closed. The birds of prey had flown. From that day to this I have seen nothing of the wily Fergusson, and in his L.O.U., which I still possess, there is but scant and sorry consolation.

Old Temple Bar and its neighbourhood up to that day I always loved, although George Augustus Sala was for ever telling us the gate was not old at all, whilst he inveighed with all his force afterwards against its hideous successor the Griffin, or whatever the dread animal is called. In the fabric of old Temple Bar was a tiny barber's shop, where I have often been shaved. The Figaro who presided over the establishment delighted in tilting up the chair of his customers, and as the City boundaries came right through his shop said, "Now you are in the West End, now you are in the City." I resented this joke, for I always thought of that grim drama by George Dibdin Pitt, first performed at the Britannia, Hoxton, in 1842, and called "Sweeney Todd, the Barber of Fleet Street; or, the String of Pearls." Sweeney Todd used to leave his customers sitting in the shaving chair on some paltry excuse; whereupon chair, customer and valuables disappeared through a trap to the cellar below, where the customer was robbed and promptly murdered. After I had been "relieved" of my £20, I always connected Fergusson with Sweeney Todd. In fact, I do so to this day.

Although I never had the slightest desire, as I said



*Photos by*

ADELAIDE NEILSON.

*[Adolphe Beau.*





before, to go on the stage and act. I cannot deny that I have often made a fool of myself as an amateur actor, and inflicted my presence on a far too indulgent audience. I mention the circumstance because in a very indirect way the fact that I had acted in private theatricals secured me my first appointment as a dramatic critic—with a safe salary, paid weekly this time.

In my young days there were acting clubs or academies, notably at Jessop's, a large hall in Catharine Street, Strand, whose site is now occupied by the *Echo* offices, and at the little King's Cross Theatre, in a small street opposite the King's Cross Railway Station. These clubs were much affected by stage-struck amateurs and Government clerks of every kind. They had nothing whatever in common with the fashionable amateur clubs of to-day, about the only training school we have for the stage now that stock companies have ceased to exist. These amateur societies have given to the regular stage such popular favourites as, amongst others, Mr. and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. George Alexander, and Mr. Hayden Coffin.

But at Catharine Street and King's Cross you could buy parts. If very wealthy, you could purchase Hamlet, Romeo, and Othello. Poor as I was, I could not aspire higher than Rosencrantz or Guildenstern—very cheap indeed—and at a pinch Horatio, a part that always suited my fancy. It is seldom well acted on the stage; for Hamlets, whether good or bad, do not like good Horatios,—they want all the sympathy, or fat, as they call it, for themselves.

Yes, I am ashamed to say, I have acted, and in public. At the old Bijou Theatre, next door to, or rather part of the same building as Her Majesty's, I have played Fleance very badly to the Macbeth of Palgrave Simpson

(in a kilt), and the Lady Macbeth of Miss Aylmer Blake, now Mrs. Aylmer Gowing, both loved and respected by us all. At the same theatre I have acted in a farce. Yes, a roaring rattling farce, written by Cardinal Wiseman, and I appeared in the episcopal presence, before the Cardinal in his rose pink, surrounded by priests and secretaries. The scene was in the consulting room of a fashionable dentist's establishment; and all I remember is that I was in the dread operating chair, and Jemmy Molloy, the barrister and popular song writer, was pretending to pull out my teeth. Cardinal Wiseman roared with laughter over his own farce, as all authors are apt to do. It was originally written, I believe, to amuse the students at the English College in Rome.

At the Bijou Theatre, Archer Street, Bayswater, I have enacted Christopher Larkings in "Woodcock's Little Game," and the boy Archie in "The Scrap of Paper." I think I rather fancied myself in a black velvet coat and knickerbockers, lent me by my old friend, Edmund Routledge, and a pair of scarlet stockings suggested by myself. This alarming costume secured me the honour of a scented note left at the stage door. After this amateur display, with lovely women in the background, who can blame actors?

My companions in crime still living are James M. Molloy, the gifted balladist and composer, and W. S. Gilbert, who rejoiced in the farce called "Number One Round the Corner;" but I fancy this brilliant poet and dramatist was about as bad an actor as I was. He could not have been a worse one!

But the most delightful theatricals at which I ever assisted were at a private house. I always think of those happy days as I pass 1, Kent Terrace, Regent's Park, to which I was introduced by a clever War Office

chum, George Mariette, an old Etonian, oarsman, fisherman, boxer, and a very good amateur actor.

The private theatricals to which I allude were presided over with dignity by a clergyman named Owen, a brilliant but eccentric parson, an ardent Freemason, a bit of a poet and casuist himself, and, with all his dignity and law-giving, a decidedly clever man. He it was who was the means, I, think, of securing me my first appointment as a dramatic critic.

Owen, the head of a charming and intellectual family, took rather a fancy to me. He appointed me a kind of court poet to the Kent Terrace theatricals; he invited me to write the prologues, epilogues, and occasional addresses, and skits, which were delivered in the Theatre Royal, Back Drawing-room, provided of course he was permitted to cast over them his editorial eye and correcting blue pencil. Needless to say, I knew my man, and submitted humbly to the views of his clerical Excellency.

For the moment I will leave the Rev. Freemason Owen. I never knew where he preached, or what duty he performed, or what his doctrines were. I only know that he looked on me with a favouring eye, and critically revised my poetry.

One day at the War Office, Tom Hood looked across the desk, with the gold eyeglass in his eye, and with his gentle, kindly voice said :

"Have you heard, Kitten, that Foard is going to resign the *Sunday Times*?"

And then, in his chaffy way, he said, semi-sarcastically :

"There will be a vacancy, you know, for a dramatic critic."

My brain seemed to reel. The dramatic critic of the *Sunday Times*!—a post requiring intimate knowledge

of the stage and absolute experience: for one slip of fact would, I imagined, mean sudden death to the critic of the leading theatrical newspapers read by the whole profession.

The *Era* and the *Sunday Times* had, in those days, no rivals. Next to the leading "dailies" they were the plums of the profession; but any writer attached to either must at that time be a staunch conservative in matters dramatic, a hater of free trade in art, and conversant with the whole history of the stage, from the mystery plays to the days of Dion Boucicault.

E. L. Blanchard, at the time of which I am speaking, was dramatic critic for the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Era* as well. By this good, generous, and unselfish man, through our friendship started at the Arundel Club, I had been introduced to Frederick Ledger, the then editor and proprietor of the *Era*, to me a delightful character, an editor of the old school, shrewd, a man of the world, not able to write very much himself, but with a keen and observant eye for the coming man, whether distinguished for his industry or talent.

Frederick Ledger took a fancy to me; he did not, at that time, care so much for my work, as for what he called my incessant energy, industry, and punctuality. What I did I did then, as now, to the best of my ability, and I also tried my best to be punctual, up-to-date, and never to keep the composers waiting. So he favoured me with odd jobs, and outside work, for the *Era*. It might be amateur entertainments, music halls, concerts, readings, anything that turned up. He knew very well that when the welcome blue envelope with the ticket arrived in my hands in Pall Mall, the little notice would be on the *Era* table next morning, even if I had to sit

up late at night to do it. Punctuality is of far more consequence than talent in journalism. There is often no time to get inspired or to think it all out. The thing has to be done at red-hot speed, the thinking must come when you are looking, and the thoughts have to be committed to paper while you are writing.

I owe much in my career to kindly, rough, but ever generous and appreciative Frederick Ledger,—a fair man, a straight man, a real "white man" as they say, and one who would never forget a kindness, and never desired to rise above his station, or to think any world in this life better than his own delightful home with his family at Balham.

Frederick Ledger when in London loved his office and his office desk in Catharine Street, Strand; his seat at supper time in one of the little boxes at Smith's oyster house near the Lyceum in the Strand and a chat with his innumerable friends at the Knights' Club—the "Knights of the Round Table," held then, and to this hour, at Simpson's Restaurant in the Strand.

They used to tell a story at the Knights' Club of old Ledger's delight when he was giving me work, and pleased to find that the most prosy subject could be treated in a livelier and more picturesque style than had hitherto obtained, compelling the reader to read more and to skip less. "Yes," said the kindly old man, "I have discovered, I think, a very promising recruit. He is ambitious, industrious, a tiger for work, but, dear me, 'he requires a deal of editing.'"

I dare say many think the same to-day as they did yesterday. Possibly this will be—but I trust not—one of the objections to the book now submitted to those who love and have loved the play. I have found all through my life, and in every department of it, that I

require "a deal of editing;" but I like to be edited by the right man, and—may I say?—the right woman, not the wrong one. That is one of my failings.

The words kept ringing in my ears.

"Foard is thinking of giving up the *Sunday Times*."

I knew James Foard well, and he has remained a faithful friend to this hour. At the time of which I am speaking—1863—James Foard was a hard-working barrister and journalist combined, seeking briefs on the Northern Circuit, and writing "copy" diligently for theatrical papers in London. I used to meet him nearly every day at the Arundel Club, of which he was virtually the proprietor, having taken the lease of the house in Salisbury Street in the interest of us all on his own responsibility.

My chance had come.

"The post of Dramatic Critic on the *Sunday Times* was vacant."

Tom Hood stared at me; I stared at Tom Hood. I could get nothing out of my friend, so I said, impetuously no doubt:

"I shall have a try for it, at any rate."

Tom Hood said nothing, but smiled, and went on copying letters.

There were no typewriters in those days in Government offices. Clerk No. 1 drafted a letter; Clerk No. 2, revised and corrected it; Clerk No. 3 wrote it out fair and in his best copper plate; Clerk No. 4 read it, sometimes swore at it, and eventually signed it; Clerk No. 5 copied the signed document in an index of letters for preservation. And for this work salaries ranged from £1,500 down to £150 a year. They do it quicker now, —but I don't think they have quite such a jolly time as we had.

When I went home that night, without saying a word to any one, I put on "my puzzling cap" and wondered what such a youngster as I was could do to impress the editor and proprietor of the *Sunday Times*, Mr. E. W. Seale, who kept an establishment called "The Bank," in Leicester Square, next door to an under-ground dining place called "The Shades," attached to old Saville House, once the home of Miss Linwood's Needlework Museum, and opposite to Wyld's Globe, which filled the whole of the Square.

I have not the slightest idea what was banked at Mr. Seale's establishment, or who banked there. I heard afterwards that he discounted securities and lent money at very fair interest. At any rate it was a neat, well-kept and imposing little office; and it struck me that it would not be a bad plan to obtain testimonials as to my worth, character, and prospects from people of note, mark, leading, and light.

Such a thing as obtaining testimonials for the appointment of dramatic critic to a London theatrical paper in order to obtain a salary of £2 a week was an arrangement unheard of at that time. It struck me then that it was a feat of Napoleonic daring, diplomacy, and strategy—if it came off.

I resolved therefore to testimonialise the influential friends of my father, who was well known and respected as a hard-working clergyman and journalist; and I verily believe that amongst the letters of recommendation that I received were those from the great Duke of Newcastle, Lord Herbert of Lea, the father of the beautiful Lady de Grey, Alexander James Beresford Hope, and the present Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, then Lord Robert Cecil, a fellow-writer with my father on the old *Morning Chronicle* and the first *Saturday Review*.



A few years before the time of which I am speaking, my father must have been one of the hardest worked men in London. In the early fifties he was not only incumbent of Christ Church, New North Road, Hoxton, with two services every day and three on Sunday to attend to, and the usual parish work; but he was a daily leader writer on the *Morning Chronicle*, the editor of the *Christian Remembrancer*, a learned theological quarterly review, and an active as well as determined controversialist.

In fact, whenever he had a spare hour from his absorbing and alarming duties, he was firing off bellicose pamphlets at the head of the Rev. Daniel Wilson, the Evangelical vicar of Islington, who was not in love with the Puseyism and mild ritual and the surpliced choir of the New North Road, where my father was wont to welcome such celebrities as Henry, Bishop of Exeter, a litigious prelate, *teste* the Gorham case, and as fond of a good fight as my father was; Samuel, Bishop of Oxford, the witty prelate; Archdeacon Denison, another fighter, if ever one existed; Charles James Blomfield, Bishop of London; James B. Mozley, and many more shining theological lights in the days of "Tract Ninety."

Although I was very young at the time, I was in a position to know how hard my father worked; for it was my duty over and over again to deliver his "copy" at the *Morning Chronicle* office, which was then in the Strand close to St. Clement Dane's Church, either walking there and back from Hoxton, or treating myself to a threepenny ride on the "knife-board" of a Chelsea 'bus that started from the "Sturt Arms," close by the New North Road turnpike gate.

My other principal journey as a "copy deliverer" was to the printing establishment of Richard Clay, of

Bread Street, Cheapside, a dear old amiable gentleman, who printed the *Christian Remembrancer*, and delighted me by taking me into his little private room to feed me with choice hot-house grapes brought up from his lovely grounds in the north of London. These things children never forget. Kindness is, to them, an eternal memory !

I suppose there is no harm in a son having a warm and sincere appreciation of his father's talent. Had my father been a lawyer instead of a clergyman, I am certain he would have taken a very distinguished position indeed, and could not have failed to rise to the Bench. He had a marvellously accurate mind, a power of close argument and of marshalling facts, a storehouse of learning, a brilliant, if pugnacious, style, and a rare power of humour. With these natural gifts he was, of course, a born journalist, and an invaluable aid to a paper like the *Morning Chronicle*, in which he reigned supreme as a social leader writer. His lash was terrible ; his sarcasm mordant ; his power with the pen pronounced. Again and again in the days of Tom Mozley and Delane they offered him a post on *The Times*, but he stuck to his friends of the *Morning Chronicle*, and never deserted them.

One example of his marvellous memory may well be recorded here. It was at once a tragedy and a triumph. The occasion was the death of the Duke of Wellington ; and, tolerably early in the day, they sent up from the office for a leader, which was virtually an historical memoir. It caused enormous research, through battles, campaigns, dates, and political history, principally at the British Museum. In the evening he arrived home worn out, to conduct the evening service at the church, and handed the priceless "copy" to the *Morning*

*Chronicle* "devil," who was waiting in the hall. When evensong was over, my father, who was dead tired, went to bed. At about ten o'clock the house was disturbed by a loud ringing at the bell. The wretched newspaper boy had come to say that he had lost the copy on his way back to the office. What was to be done? Well, I should not like to have been that boy—for even clergymen have tempers at times, and some one whispers at my side "they are hereditary failings that don't escape a generation."

The only thing to do was to jump into a cab and go down to the office. This was promptly done: for time was getting short, and the paper would have to go to press in a few hours. There was nothing but memory to depend on now—no British Museum, no books, no dates of battles, no anything. But my father bravely sat down to do the article all over again. The strain on his brain must have been terrific. The next day the original article was found in the street, and forwarded to the editor John Douglas Cook. It was recognised, with astonishment and surprise, that, *mirabile dictu*, the two articles did not differ by half a dozen words. The second article had been literally recopied off the author's brain!

At last an end came to the good old *Morning Chronicle* as a Peelite paper. I believe it was bought by Serjeant Glover to support the Napoleonic dynasty in Paris. At any rate, Beresford Hope, Vernon Harcourt, Douglas Cook, Philip Harward—the father of a brilliant girl dramatist, Ross Neil—the talented sub-editor, and all the gifted men who had helped one another with the *Morning Chronicle*, determined to put their energies into a new weekly literary journal. It was to be called the *Saturday Review*.

This novel and original paper was to consist of a series of leaders—political, social, controversial—and an exhaustive system of literary criticism. It was my father who wrote the actual prospectus that launched the *Saturday Review* into fame, and John Douglas Cook undertook to sample the best intellects of the time. The foresight of this remarkable editor may be proved by the fact that he was the very first to encourage and bring to the front the woman journalist. My dear old friend, Mrs. Lynn Linton, was one of the very first women writers in the newspapers who became famous by means of the *Saturday Review*. Many and many a time she must have visited the end chambers at the Albany, next to Vigo Street, where dwelt John Douglas Cook, in a kind of regal state, and where every week a committee of editors, consisting of Cook, Harward, and my father, debated the policy of the week, and allotted the articles to the various authors.

It is a matter of history that "The Girl of the Period" articles originated from the prolific pen of Mrs. Lynn Linton; but the secret of the success of this singularly gifted woman has never been properly known—I mean the starting point in her career. Douglas Cook and my father conceived the idea of working women journalists to the front. What did they do? They employed a woman to review a book of a rival woman. Thus if Annie Thomas or Florence Marryat brought out a novel, they would send on the volume to Mrs. Lynn Linton, or another, to praise or to scarify. And *vice versâ*. The result was admirable. The paper became brilliant.

Of course I do not pretend to say that Mrs. Lynn Linton was the first of women journalists. Years before the date of her *Saturday Review* career Harriet

Martineau wrote for the *Daily News*. But the Douglas Cook policy was to set woman against woman, and to see who would make the best fight of it. This same deliberate policy went even farther than that. He selected writers not so much from the fact that they were journalists and in the trade, so to speak, but because they had special knowledge on special subjects. Man of the world as he was, Douglas Cook, like Delane, went into society, dined out, was an admitted gourmet, and met all sorts and conditions of men.

For instance, he would meet my old and lamented friend Richard Quain—Sir Richard Quain, Baronet, of after days; he would know he was appointed by the Government to serve on some important Royal Commission. That surely was the very man to be well informed on that subject, and to be able to write well and accurately upon it. The *Saturday Review* was bound to have its staff of writers; but it depended for its first success on specialist writers, and that at a time when signed articles were very rare. Every article printed breathed the idea that it had been written by a man or a woman perfectly familiar with the subject under discussion. The design of the founders of the paper, was to encourage and foster, and bring to the front, hidden or undeveloped talent.

Thus Lord Robert Cecil, now Marquis of Salisbury, was found writing on politics, Sir Vernon Harcourt on law, Fitzjames Stephen and Saunders on political economy, John Oxenford on the drama, James Davison of *The Times* on music, John Ruskin on pictorial art; whilst not a book was reviewed but by a specialist on the subject in question. The search for talent on the part of the editor and his assistants was unwearying

I remember well telling my father, at the time he was in strong power on the *Saturday Review* literary committee, of a brilliant young man who had just come up to London from Queen's College, Oxford, where he had distinguished himself in a remarkable manner. It may have been my enthusiasm in the cause of literature and of my young friend; it may have been from the fact that my father, educated at Merchant Taylors' School, was himself a Michel fellow of Queen's College, Oxford; but, at any rate, my young pal was sent for by Douglas Cook to the well-known chambers in the Albany, and he became one of the very youngest contributors to the *Saturday Review*, a few weeks after he had taken his degree.

We all envied his success, but did not grudge him one ounce of it. His name was and is T. H. S. Escott. He became very famous as a journalist; and I rejoice to see that, after a long and exhausting illness, bravely borne, the Escott of the *Saturday Review* is still writing brilliantly on the *Observer* and elsewhere.

My father's work on the *Saturday Review* was pretty much what it had been before on the *Morning Chronicle*—social leaders on subjects of the hour and reviews of all books that appealed to him; and his knowledge was universal. If I were asked what was the best bit of work he ever did for the *Saturday Review*, apart from his scathing comments on the religious controversies of the hour, I should say it was the argument pro and con, and the summing up, of the Beecher Stowe controversy on the subject of Lord Byron and his luckless marriage.

Lawyers have often told me that this series of articles was, for reliability, argument, and legal acumen, quite masterly. But, notwithstanding his accuracy and

judicial mind, even he did not free the *Saturday Review* from certain actions for libel. I think he had something to do with the once celebrated libel cases of "Achilli v. Newman" (1852); "Rev. Dr. Campbell v. Spottiswoode" (1863), in which the plaintiff got £50 damages, with the extraordinary rider that "the writer of the *Saturday Review* believed his imputations to be well founded"; and in a case tried at Edinburgh in 1865, "Longworth (Mrs. Yelverton) v. Beresford Hope and Cook."

This is how Mrs. Yelverton was described: "We have no notion of making a heroine of such a person as Miss Longworth. She is out of keeping with society both as it is, and ought to be. She is an adventuress, launched into the world nobody knows how, with a previous history which has never been told. She is made up of passion, and prudence; of hard intellectual vigour and sensuous thought and feelings. She writes as no modest woman writes, and she schemes as no modest woman would scheme. She has religious scruples, but they do not restrain her from provoking at least to sin. The best that can be hoped for her is that she will abandon that world which will act most kindly by forgetting her and forgiving her offence against society."

That was pretty strong, but the jury decided in favour of my father and the *Saturday Review* by nine to three!

But, to return to the *Sunday Times*, there was one testimonial that arrived on the desk of Mr. Seale at the Bank, Leicester Square, which carried, I think, more weight with the editor and proprietor of the paper than all the contributions from literary and titled personages connected with

the *Saturday Review*. And that testimonial came from Mr. Owen, the liberal-minded clergyman, and my patron at the Kent Terrace private theatricals.

Mr. Owen was, as I said before, an enthusiastic Freemason. So was Mr. Seale. So indeed were most editors and proprietors of theatrical and other journals. When I applied to my friend Owen for a testimonial, he looked very grave but earnest. He handed me the important document, and I noticed it was adorned with various cabalistic signs and ornaments, known perhaps in the Temple of Solomon, and possibly implying that his brother Freemason might well open it, if not read it, and note its contents favourably.

Not being a Freemason, I did not know the meaning of the hieroglyphics, nor do I know what influenced the banker of Leicester Square in his choice of a dramatic critic to succeed James Foard; but this I do know, that to my intense joy I was sent for to the banker's sanctum at the Bank in Leicester Square, and there and then was, at the age of twenty-one, appointed dramatic critic to one of the most influential theatrical and trade papers in London, at the princely salary of £2 a week.

The welcome appointment was followed by the following letter, which I have kept framed and glazed ever since, and it was written thirty-six years ago !



Sunday Times Office.

103. Fleet Street, E.C.

London July 20<sup>th</sup> 1863.

Gen<sup>l</sup> M<sup>r</sup>.

The bearer Clement  
Scott Esq is appointed Dramatic  
critic of the Sunday Times, and  
I shall feel obliged by your  
facilitating <sup>his</sup> entry to your  
several Theatres, by placing  
his name on the free list, and  
forwarding to this office the earliest  
intimation of the intended pro-  
duction of a new piece, or any  
theatrical information of public  
interest.

I am Gen<sup>l</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Yours obed<sup>t</sup>  
To Managers of Theatres &c. R W Tealer  
Promotor

## CHAPTEK XIII

### “EARLY DAYS AS A DRAMATIC CRITIC”

Now that, with reckless impetuosity, I have, as a mere lad, leaped into the saddle and seized up the reins of that fatal charger, dramatic criticism, it may be well to view the dangerous prospects before me. It was, I assure you, by no means one of hopefulness or encouragement in the early months of the year 1863.

Society knew little of the stage, and cared less. A Macready, by the dignity of his art, by his laudable ambition, and by the heroism of endeavour, would have been made welcome had he so chosen, in aristocratic circles, where courtesy has ever existed, and where patronage in those days was invariably given to the worthiest. Charles Kean, by his Eton associations, by the traditions of his great name, by the uprightness of his life and character, and by the great esteem in which his clever wife was held, might have, had he thought fit, selected his own society.

But neither Macready nor Kean were so rash or foolish as to quit the society in which they were bred and born for one which, however much it might have complimented them, would have proved irksome and full of *ennui* as a recreation for a hard-worked man.

They preferred, and I think rightly preferred, the aristocracy of letters and art, to the aristocracy of birth and breeding. Macready felt more at home at the dinner tables of Bloomsbury and Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he met Dickens, and Forster, and Egg, and Frank Stone, and Maclise, and Robert Browning, and the great painters and poets and professional men of the day, men of his own class, than if he had been daily knocking at the doors of Devonshire House and clamouring for invitations in order that his name might appear in a reception list, and be advertised in the public papers.

Charles Kean, who lived humbly in Torrington Square, close by his work in Oxford Street, always found a knife and fork waiting for him and a warm welcome into the bargain, at the house hard by in Doughty Street, of his attached friend and counsellor, Mr. J. M. Levy, destined to become the proprietor of the largest and most important paper of our time in England. Charles Kean, like Macready, could have dined off gold plate also, had he so cared; but before all things he was a professional man, and on the whole preferred to share the hospitable meals of his friends off simple blue and white willow pattern. Samuel Phelps loved his peaceful home in Canonbury Square and a "week end" at Farningham to fish.

The great acting families, the Mathews, the Keeleys, the Farrens, the Vinings, formed a little colony of their own down Brompton way, Brompton Square, Brompton Crescent, St. Michael's Place, Pelham Crescent, and so on, where they lived unpretentious, unostentatious and hardworking lives, keeping themselves to themselves as humble citizens when off the stage, like sensible people as they were. "Society," as it is known now,

would have had very little temptation for any of them.

They had their clubs of course, and the leading lights of the profession belonged to the Garrick, where they might be found sometimes in the afternoon, or, with their coats off, playing bowls at Kilpack's, in Covent Garden; but domesticity was very dear to one and all of them.

Work meant work on the stage in those days, and distinction was never made without it. Here is the average routine of an actor's life of that time.

Rehearsal as a rule from ten to two; then home to an early dinner, at three; after that, readjusting, mending and "faking up" their own theatrical clothes; a nap for an hour, and then to work again by means of a Brompton 'bus. After work the 'bus again, an enjoyable supper, a smoke, and so to bed. On Saturday night a little recreation was permitted, a longer stay at the Garrick; but no actor, however popular or sought after, would have dreamed of going into society, giving gratuitous services for charities, churches, bazaars, institutions with which the actor has no possible connection, and wearing himself out at crowded, heated receptions, with to-morrow's rehearsals, anxiety and work in prospect.

There was no greater favourite in England than Charles Mathews; but every evening when the curtain was down he would be found at home in smoking cap, dressing gown and slippers, supping with his wife, reading French novels, studying fresh parts, or writing those entertaining letters for which he was so distinguished. I am lucky enough to possess one, penned in the midnight hours in Pelham Crescent; and I give it here in facsimile, to show the neatness and

order of a man who was supposed to be the type of recklessness, carelessness, and disorder. A more methodical man did not exist, and he never left a letter unanswered.



Pelham Crescent  
March 25<sup>th</sup> 1864

My dear Christina,

My wife says - and she is always right - that I never answered a note you wrote me ages ago about French papers &c and upon my life I don't think I ever did. This is awful 'and you such a peppery fellow too!' I wonder you have stood it all. If I had answered I should have said "Good; it shall be borne in mind - though I generally do what I can, myself, with a short hand writer." The best plan would be for you to find a subject and talk it over with me and if taking one you could take the law into your own hands "Les idées de Madame Austrey" you need not look at - indeed

I don't think it would be proper for your young mind, and I don't know that I am right in diverting your attention at all to the French Stage in its present condition. Still if you are bent upon it, why I will not oppose any obstacle, only pray pray be careful, there's a dear boy. You might apply to a steady right thinking man like those for direction and consult him before you plunge headlong into the French pronunciation. Again I say pray be careful. Contamination is the thief of time and evil communication is worth two in the bush.

Faithfully Yours  
E. T. Matthews

The first task committed to me on the *Sunday Times* was to describe a tournament—a long way off the famous aristocratic one at Eglinton some years before—which had been arranged at Cremorne Gardens by the notorious Edward Tyrrell Smith.

E. T. Smith was quite a character in those days, and, in spite of his recklessness and dare-devil nature, was a man universally liked by his friends and the public. He was everything by turns, and nothing long; but if

any theatrical speculation was in the air, E. T. Smith was bound to be in it.

He was born on the 26th of August, 1804, and was the eldest son of Admiral E. T. Smith. He was appointed midshipman in Lord Cochrane's ship, but motherly affection fetched him back the night before the ship sailed. He was at first in the Metropolitan Constabulary, and subsequently an auctioneer. E. T. Smith was essentially a man given to speculation. The first of his schemes was connected with what used to be Crockford's gaming-house in St. James's Street, which he was instrumental in turning into a fashionable restaurant, known as the Wellington. It is now the Devonshire Club.

E. T. Smith was a speculator with Vauxhall Gardens in the days of their decadence ; but his connection with theatres may be said to have begun in 1850, when he took the Marylebone, which he held for two years, and then, most rashly as some thought, entered on the lesseeship of Drury Lane Theatre. The house was in dreadfully bad odour, and had been in the market for a considerable time, and was considered to be such a bad speculation that the ground lessee, the Duke of Bedford, actually contemplated its immediate destruction.

On the 27th of December, 1852, he opened the house with "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and "Harlequin Hudibras, or The Droll Days of the Merry Monarch" (E. L. Blanchard's pantomime), and introduced morning performances.

Don't forget that ! Who was the founder of the *matinée* ? Despised E. T. Smith. He spared no expense in engaging the best artists. He had Beverley for his scene-painter ; and during his tenancy of Drury Lane, Charles Mathews, G. V. Brooke, the Charles Keans,

and some of the best stars made their appearance on the boards. He was also one of the first to recognise provincial talent, and bring it to London. He was the founder of the Alhambra in Leicester Square, known previous to that as the Panopticon, and opened it as a circus, on the 7th of February, 1858.

He was lessee of Her Majesty's ; and in Italian opera, Titiens, Piccolomini, and Giuglini appeared under him. He leased Cremorne Gardens from 1861 to 1869. From 1867, he was lessee of the Lyceum for two years. From 1863, he was lessee of Astley's, which he ran for some years. Commencing in October, 1870, he ran the Surrey for a short season. In 1871, he took Highbury Barn ; and, not very long afterwards, became the proprietor of the Regent Music Hall, Westminster.

This indefatigable man then appears to have turned his attention again to restaurant catering, and opened a dining hall under the vaults of the Royal Exchange, which was a conspicuous failure. For this venture he engaged as a barmaid Alice Rhodes, who, in my presence, was condemned to death by Mr. Justice Hawkins for the terribly sensational Penge murder, but was subsequently freely pardoned. Years before he started the Radnor, at the Holborn corner of Chancery Lane, and opened a refreshment room in Leicester Square known as the Cremorne Supper Rooms.

The *Sunday Times* became his property in 1856 for a short time, and he also started the *Bedfordshire Independent*, with a view of entering Parliament ; but not obtaining sufficient support, he very shortly gave up both these journals. He made many friends, who were always ready to assist him in his various speculations, and though these did not always turn out profitable to the investors, it should be mentioned that his friendships



were lasting ; his perfect faith and honesty of purpose were never for an instant doubted. He was a noted character in his day : he liked to see his name in print as a generous supporter of any form of charity ; and, though it has been imputed to him that he did this for the sake of advertisement, there were numerous exceptions to the rule, and a great many of his acts emanated from genuine kindness. He died on the 26th of November. 1877, and was buried at Brompton Cemetery.

I was naturally anxious to distinguish myself in writing my very first article for the *Sunday Times* in connection with the Cremorne Tournament, held in the old Chelsea riverside Gardens, where I have so often seen the day break on a lovely summer morning, the purple dawn and the searching pure light contrasting sadly with the pale and painted strayed revellers dancing on a platform to the music of Jules Rivi re, or supping in cosy arbours and boskages. So, knowing nothing whatever of tournaments by experience, I naturally went straight to Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" and described my Cremorne tournament with the correct phrases and colour. Mr. Seale, my editor and proprietor, expected a few lines about the Cremorne show. Instead of that he received about a column and a half. It cheered my heart to get a letter from him, saying he was delighted with my work, and hoped I would "go on and prosper." He could not have given me a greater gift than that, it is one that editors and proprietors often neglect—the great gift of encouragement. They are more inclined to pooh-pooh your work, in order to keep down your salary and check your influence.

The dramatist gets warm praise more often than blame ; for many actors and actresses it is, as Mr. Pinero desires, "praise, praise, praise ;" but the anonymous

dramatic journalist works, comparatively speaking, in the dark. If his work is appreciated he never hears of the congratulations muttered over the newspaper, at the breakfast table, or after-dinner cigar. That is all done in silence. For the journalist there is no applause. But if, on the other hand, his work is disliked, he hears of it with a vengeance; his letter-box is filled with insulting letters, and his editor is pestered with applications for the critic's "head in a charger." How many thousands of times have they clamoured for my dismissal!—and at last, after forty years' service in the cause of the drama and the actor, I dismissed myself, in order to avoid any unnecessary complication.

At the outset I could see plainly that I needed every breath of encouragement I could get. I had attached myself to a theatrical journal of long standing, a trades organ of considerable importance, whose principles were violently and obstinately Conservative. The old patents and privileges had not long been removed, and the first faint glimmer of free trade in dramatic art was seen when I became attached to the staff of the *Sunday Times*.

My proprietor, unluckily for me and my enterprise, held that to mention a French play or a foreign actor in any shape or form was to insult our own artists, and "to take the bread out of their mouths." Chauvinism in dramatic art was rampant, worse, far worse, than the protectionist policy that obtains to this day in Paris, notwithstanding the revolt of a Sarah Bernhardt and a Coquelin, who broke away from the fetters of the Comédie Française and gave their art to the world at large. Loving the art as I did,—art I mean for art's sake,—enjoying heartily, as a boy would, the rushes over to Paris to see what was going on at a time

that the Parisian stage was incontestably the finest in the world, I had to feel my way very gingerly indeed to the free-trade doctrine that I was determined to preach one day or other from the house tops. To have been rash would have been madness,—besides, I wanted my two guineas a week.

The old feud between English and foreign stages was slumbering lightly, not fast asleep.

Many were alive who remembered the hubbub between Edmund Kean and Lucius Junius Booth ; the horror of the Macready riots in America had not died out ; the jealousy of Wallack and his companions had not been forgotten ; and it required tact, determination, and not a little pluck, for young writers to clear a path for such stars as Charles Fechter, who dared to play Shakespeare in English ; for Miss Kate Bateman with her Leah ; and for the ever delightful Jefferson as Rip van Winkle.

I could not have done it alone. The first gust would have blown me down before I felt my feet. But I knew this was to be the great fight, to give free trade to the theatre and the music hall, which were both degraded by the policy of protection. In this good work such bold and determined fighters as John Hollingshead and Edmund Yates had preceded me ; and when the time came for the battle royal which ended in that memorable breakfast at the Crystal Palace to the full company of the Comédie Française, with speeches by Lord Granville, Lord Dufferin, and Alfred Wigan, I fought side by side with such champions for free trade as Joseph Knight, Herman Merivale, Lewis Wingfield, W. S. Gilbert, W. R. McConnell, and many more. *Finis coronat opus.*

But the work had been very uphill and desperate ; we had all of us been dismissed from many papers, or degraded as unpatriotic, before that lovely summer day

at Sydenham, when we welcomed Got and Delaunay, Bressant and Maubant, Favart and Reichemberg, Jouassin and Dinah Felix, as brothers and sisters in an art we all loved.

This is how I described the celebrated and momentous banquet to the Comédie Française, that took place on the 10th of July, 1871 :

" Poets are apt to become sentimental about deserted halls and extinguished lights at the conclusion of a feast. Shelley sings of the shattered lamp and the light in the dust, declaring emphatically that neither music nor splendour survives the lamp or the lute. Moore paints the utter desolation of one who treads among fled lights and dead garlands, ' Some banquet hall deserted ' ; while, as for Gay, he is not ashamed to look at the practical side of a feast enjoyed, and actually whispers—

" ' So comes a reckoning when the banquet's o'er—  
The dreadful reckoning ; and men smile no more.' "

Seldom, however, has an entertainment ended, bringing in its train so little regret as the banquet given to the artists of the Comédie Française—on the eve of their departure for Paris. Not to beat about the bush, we may declare at once, that success crowned the efforts of the originators of the scheme in a most marked manner. A graceful compliment was most gracefully paid ; and the bright sunshine which cheered most Londoners, after much weary weather, was typical of the triumph of the entertainment for which many anticipated a miserable failure.

" It was felt that only one thing was necessary to make the *coup d'œil* perfect, that one thing was the sun. Anxiety on this point was soon at an end ; for the banquet had hardly commenced before our welcome

friend began dancing round the head of Mr. Alfred Wigan, and showing his fixed determination to disregard all awnings, and curtains, and blinds of every description. If we had come to the tropics, we must have a taste of the tropics. So thought the sun; and down he came, streaming into the *voûte de cristal*, as if to give a warm welcome to the honoured guests. From Mr. Wigan he travelled to young M. Bouchier, lighting up his happy face, and so past M. Talbot and M. Garraud, resting affectionately for some time over the head of M. Delaunay, giving extra brilliancy to those bright eyes of his, on again to Lord Dufferin, thanking him for his kindness in presiding; welcoming M. Got, dancing about the Foreign Minister (Lord Granville), who was in high spirits, bringing up in relief the grave head of M. Bressant, and on again past M. Chery, and Lord Powerscourt, and Mr. Charles Russell, until he departed somewhere about the region of Sir Matthew Wyatt.

"There was no getting rid of this affectionate sun and his pleasant pranks. Mr. Wigan put on his hat, there was no help for it; and at last some one suggested the Eastern magnificence of an attendant slave. Lord Houghton's servant was told off with a green silk umbrella, to protect each guest as the sun attacked him in turn, and to allow him to enjoy in comfort his champagne cup and mayonnaise. Other visitors, who had no servants, and no green silk umbrellas, devised turbans out of dinner napkins, the effect of some hundred white-hooded heads being very striking.

"In the banqueting hall the Grenadier Band, under Mr. Godfrey, was playing an approved selection of music; away in the distance, Mdlle. Titiens and the full Drury Lane Chorus were reciting Mozart's 'Don Giovanni,' and in the immediate vicinity of the tables

the great fountain splashed, the tropical birds screamed, and a cage of doves not far off kept up a delicious cooing.

"It is only necessary to add, that when Lord Dufferin rose to speak the fountain was turned off, the band was silent, even the opera recital appeared to be less violent, and all the birds listened discreetly to the chairman without any further expression of opinion than an occasional loud scream from a bad-tempered macaw when the cheering was very violent. Although the general public was not admitted even to a peep at the banquet, the speeches and most of the general conversation had no doubt been retained for future visitors to the Tropical Department of the Crystal Palace, for confidential communication by numerous parrots with retentive memories. A happy thought of the executive committee did not allow the compliment to our French friends to end with the last speech.

"In the opinion of many, by far the pleasantest part of the entertainment was when Lord Dufferin led the way to an outside gallery near the aquarium, where coffee and cigars were provided. This was the signal for all formality to be broken through. The afternoon was delicious, and a cool breeze blowing off the blue Surrey hills in the distance was most grateful. There was a tent for those who disliked the sun, and an open space for those who preferred basking. A successful afternoon could not have had a more delightful termination, and we may safely say that a more 'unstagy' *déjeuner* was never given.

"A display of the fountains on the terrace followed as a matter of course, and conversation became perfectly general, the guests being passed about from one host to

another ; and thus sped the too short time which elapsed between the banquet and the inevitable return home.

“Mr. Buckstone, who had been prevented by a morning performance from coming down earlier, made a point of arriving in time to smoke a cigar before the guests had gone. They returned as they came in the carriages lent to them.

“One word about the ladies,—they were not forgotten. More direct allusions no doubt would have been made to them in the speeches had not MM. les Commissaires determined to cut down the speechifying to the smallest possible limit. Early in the morning, however, a messenger was despatched to the apartments of the ‘*sœurs en art*’ with a handsome bouquet, and a portfolio from Mr. Leighton containing one of the presentation cards.

“All must be glad—enthusiasts about dramatic art or not—that the compliment has been paid. The unselfish energy, the unwearying determination to gain that success which no mortal can demand, the sacrifice of time which is money to hardworking men, displayed by the honorary secretaries, Mr. Wingfield and Mr. Knight, cannot be too generously appreciated. We frequently wish to pay pretty compliments, but such pretty compliments as these require organisation and enthusiasm as well.

“Like the stars sung of by Beranger, these great artists have sparkled for an instant and disappeared. They have left behind them a bright track of pleasant memories, as a few hundred admirers attempted to show at the breakfast, and a few hundred more at the theatre in the evening.

“Mr. Alfred Wigan, in his admirable speech advocating not a State-aided theatre, but a millionaire-

aided theatre for which capital would be found by art-lovers for art, said: 'Milord Dufferin, Milords et Messieurs,—Dans le circonstance assez difficile où je me trouve, celle d'avoir à m'exprimer dans une langue qui n'est pas la mienne, je pourrais faire appel à votre gracieuse indulgence, mais je n'en ferai rien; car cette difficulté aura le bon effet d'empêcher un long speech —(laughter)—qui loin d'ajouter à l'amusement de nos convives et de leurs hôtes aurait bien pu les ennuyer. Je n'essaierai point de suivre mon illustré confrère dans son essor poétique et élève d'éloquence. Je me contenterai de dire qu'on ne saurait trouver une meilleure preuve de ce sentiment de 'la fraternité divine des intelligences humaines' auquel il fait allusion d'un manière si éloquente qu'en comparant l'opinion qui existe aujourd'hui en France touchant le génie de Shakspeare à celle qui existait il y a cent ans.

"Reinard a dit que 'Shakspeare n'était qu'un vilain singe.' Voltaire lui-même a dit, 'ce Shakspeare si sauvage, si bas, si effréné, si absurde avait des étincelles de génie,' et dans sa traduction de Jules Cæsar il a choisi quelques perles de l'énorme fumier de Shakspeare. Telle était l'opinion de ce grand homme. Mais pour me servir de l'expression de Sganarelle dans le 'Medecin malgré Lui' de Molière, 'Nous avons changés tout cela.' Quelque grande que soit mon admiration pour le talent de nos convives il s'y mêle un sentiment d'envie—c'est la possession de ce noble théâtre où ils peuvent à la représentation des œuvres des leurs meilleurs auteurs avec cette patience consciencieuse et ce talent hors de linge, dont nous admirons tant les brillants résultats; théâtre indépendant de tout speculation pecuniaire, et qui peut ainsi diriger et guider le goût public vers ce qui est pur et élevé dans leur art.



“ Sous notre système actuel du gouvernement l’art ne doit point compter sur l’aide de l’état. J’ai néanmoins quelque espoir que la visite de mes camarades de la Comédie Française donnera une nouvelle vigueure à un mouvement qui, je crois, commence à se faire sentir de la nécessité, de l’utilité de cette aide. Il n’est point à douter que quelques-unes des immense richesses particulières de l’Angleterre ne soient entre les mains de personnes qui seraient charmées de voir l’art dramatique solidement établi parmi nous. Si on attirait leur attention sur les principes de la constitution du Conservatoire et du Théâtre Français, on pourrait peut-être réaliser un fonds suffisant pour l’établissement d’une institution analogue dans la patrie de Shakspeare.

“ Si tel devait être l’effet de cette visite nous vous devrions une grosse dette de reconnaissance. Je ne me permettrai pas de remercier M. Got du compliment qu’il a bien voulu faire à la littérature et à la presse ; cette tâche appartient à de plus habiles que moi ; mais comme membre de la profession dramatique de l’Angleterre je le remercie sincèrement, et je prie M. Got de croire que nous avons souhaité la bien venue aux artistes de la Comédie Française à leur arrivée.

“ Aussi unissons nous nos félicitations à celles de notre noble Président sur le succès qui les a accompagnés et sur la haute estime que leur talent leur acquise. Nous espérons bien avoir le bonheur de les accueillir de nouveau dans des circonstances plus heureuses que celles qui nous ont procuré le plaisir de leur première visite. Je termine en vous remerciant, milords et messieurs, de l’honneur que vous m’avez fait en me permettant de répondre à ce toast. Merci aussi de la bienveillance avec laquelle vous avez daigné m’écouter.”

The memory of that day will be for me as lasting as life. After breakfast, the whole thing having been a superb success, I was sitting out that heavenly June afternoon on a balcony looking out over the Crystal Palace Gardens and the distant hills, talking to Delaunay—to me the most accomplished comedian, the most exquisite and fantastic lover I have ever seen or indeed am ever likely to see. If I am to see again a comedian of polish like Delaunay or a melodramatic actor and lover like Charles Fechter, it will be little short of a miracle. If I do, I will own it straight and square. But I cannot forget. I love all that is good—I cannot forget!

Delaunay was attracted by my enthusiasm, and, like all of us, I am not ashamed to own it, was soothed by the flattery that has the ring of sincerity in it.

He touched my hand with gentleness and said, "Dear friend, we are to play to-night in the 'On ne badine pas avec l'Amour,' of Alfred de Musset,—Favart and I. You will be there. I will play Perdican to-night as I have never played the part before in my life. But *for you*—mark you, *for you*!" How true this is! The actor acts for some one with whom he is in sympathy; the singer sings for one he or she loves or one who appreciates the art; the dramatic critic writes for one who will read him in silence and whisper tenderly, "How right he is!" *I felt the same!*

Delaunay carried out his promise to the very letter. I never saw such acting in my life. Both Favart and Delaunay were absolutely inspired that evening as Camille and Perdican!

Amidst a silence that could be felt they came to the end of the play. Camille's love for Perdican wells out

and masters her in spite of herself, and she kneels in an agony of grief. They confess that they love one another and no one else, and that pride has made them both do wrong to each other and to Rosette,—a part played to perfection by Reichemberg.

Scarcely has the confession been made when they hear a low wailing sob in the corridor. It is the cry of a broken heart, a cry so full of anguish that it made the audience shiver.

“Rosette must have been listening!” hisses Camille under her breath, and rushes like a whirlwind out of the room.

Then Delaunay did a thing that I have never seen done on any stage. He dropped to the floor at the back, and came down on his knees to the footlights in an attitude of prayer, with face as pale as death, sobbing, and supplicating :

“Oh God ! let me not be a murderer !”

There was a dead silence ! Then another wild rush of a startled woman ; and Favart, without noticing the abject figure of the man on his knees, swept across the stage like a whirlwind, saying :

“Elle est morte ! Adieu, Perdican !”

And then the curtain fell.

I never saw such a sight in a theatre.

Every one unconsciously had risen to their feet in the stalls. I found that my arm was clutched by a very handsome lady who was my immediate neighbour, and there we stood spellbound.

When the reaction came, my beautiful neighbour whispered :

“I beg your pardon. I could not help it ! I wanted something to tear ! Was it not grand ?”

And there were tears in her eyes.

Delaunay had fulfilled his promise. He had acted Perdican as he had never acted it before !

In order to show how violent and aggressive was the theatrical "protectionist policy" in the year 1848, and to account for its obstinate continuance up to 1860 and longer, like a barnacle on the hulk of the dramatic ship, I cannot do better than describe the riot at Drury Lane as summed up by Charles Mathews on the occasion of the appearance of the Parisian company of the Théâtre Historique. Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with. So thought the English dogs in the manger who insisted that if there must be French plays in London they should be acted at the St. James's Theatre and nowhere else, and reserved for the aristocratic audiences provided by Mr. Mitchell, of Bond Street.

To act a French play at Drury Lane was considered an insult to Englishmen and to English art. "Take it away, kill it, bury it, crucify it !" was the cry of the rabid protectionists. "Monte Cristo," "a mere melodrama," might, one would have thought, have been left to its fate. It was described as a grand drama, in ten acts and eleven tableaux, occupying two evenings in the performance. But "Monte Cristo" was the red rag to the infuriated British bull, and the bull in the end gored and mutilated "Monte Cristo."

Let me review the situation. In 1848 "Monte Cristo," as acted by French players, is hissed off the stage as an insult to English art and its future. In 1899,—with France as dead to free trade in art as ever it was, so far as Paris is concerned, as Chauvinistic, as isolated, as protectionist in dramatic policy as she was nearly sixty years ago,—we find Sarah Bernhardt, the greatest French artist since Rachel, playing Hamlet in French with the approval of all art-loving England, at the Adelphi

Theatre. Surely this is a feather in the cap of the champions of free trade ! But, at any rate, this is the story of the " Monte Cristo " riot at Drury Lane.

The riot which took place at Drury Lane Theatre on the 12th of June, 1848, on the attempted production of " Monte Cristo " by the company of the Théâtre Historique was one of the most serious, and one of the least justifiable, that ever occurred in the history of the English stage. Every effort had been made for days before to excite a feeling of animosity against the French players. Every artful appeal to the narrow-mindedness of the most narrow-minded among the public and the profession had been industriously circulated before the opening of the theatre. It was understood that a careful organisation existed with the object of crushing the audacious foreigners once for all, and of effectually preventing any further attempt to interfere with native talent. A specimen of the literature of this campaign will show the sort of argument which was used on the protectionist side of the question, and which men of eminence and position were not ashamed in some measure to endorse by their subsequent acts.

"BRITONS, STAND BY THE BRITISH DRAMA, AND  
HELP TO RESTORE IT TO ITS PRISTINE HEALTH  
AND VIGOUR !

"Shall the land that gave birth to that wonder of the world, Shakespeare, be remembered for its dramatic excellence in the era only of Elizabeth ? Shall the Theatres Royal (?) Drury Lane and Covent Garden, erected and patented for the British Drama, be the means of crushing it by being devoted to Italian effeminacy and French immorality ? Is our native drama,

like Mary Queen of Scots, to be lost by modern David Rizzios? How is art in British acting and writing to be cultivated and encouraged, if their temples are thus to pervert the taste of the public from what is English? And these theatres will never be let to English speculators on moderate terms (witness the treatment Macready experienced from the proprietors of both), while grasping music-mongering foreigners can be found to outbid them.

"Let these foreigners keep to their strongholds, Her Majesty's Italian Theatre in the Haymarket, and the royally-patronised French theatre in St. James's, and welcome. Let this very historique troop act at the latter theatre on those nights not applied to the Palais Royal troop, and their reception will be all they could desire; but do not let them invade the most sacred domain of the British author and actor. What would those identical French actors say, if their grand Théâtre Français at Paris became the arena for horse-riders and Coburg melodramas? But in France reciprocity with Englishmen is hopeless; not so their feelings towards Italians, Germans, and Spaniards.

"The ever-varying *Times*, in most pitying and pitiful style, would, as usual, mislead the public by implying that the demonstration is against *all* foreigners, instead of truly stating that it is only against their occupation of our national theatres, and to confine their exuberance within its naturalised sphere of alienated English hearts.

"As for those un-English small fry of the venal parts of the press, Albert Smith, Boucicault (the acting manager by-the-by of this French company), Kenney and Co., whose slimy wanderings may sometimes be traced even in the most respectable of newspapers, who

suck Frenchmen's brains through a quill and void the diluted matter forth as specimens of British society and manners, consign their immoral plagiarisms to the flame, and let it be the funeral pile of their ephemeral fame. But who, after all, has headed and aided this desecration? That concert-monster of charlatanism and ingratitude, *soupe* Jullien, who has fattened on English patronage, and blighted pure musical taste, by the introduction in orchestras of church bells, chain cables, blacksmiths' anvils, blue and red fire, and every species of gag. It is an insult to an enlightened nation like this—an insult to common sense, and the age we live in. Be liberal, but be just!"

In reply to this remarkable composition the following handbill was circulated in Drury Lane :

“TO THE PUBLIC.

“An attempt has been made to influence public opinion against the Théâtre Historique by certain unjust and malicious insinuations, which the directors of the theatre feel themselves called upon to refute.

“The actors of this theatre have not come to London for the purpose of substituting for the English drama their own pieces, or of entering into a competition, more or less lucrative, with the other theatrical establishments of London.

“Availing themselves of the opportunity afforded by the closing of Drury Lane Theatre, which no English company seemed disposed to reopen, the directors of the Théâtre Historique felt desirous of presenting to a London auditory a few representations of the most celebrated works of M. Alex. Dumas and Auguste Maquet, in the hope that a public, so alive to the

excellences of literature and the arts, would witness their efforts with curiosity, if not with a favour which it would be their endeavour to merit.

"The artistes of all countries are brethren, and know not the word nationality. France received with admiration and enthusiasm the English *chefs d'œuvre* presented on their stage by those excellent tragedians, Miss Faucit and Mr. Macready. As conscientious, as zealous in the cause of their art, although, perhaps, less talented, the actors of the Théâtre Historique expect from the loyalty and good feeling of a London public the honourable welcome due to honourable exertions."

What the riot itself was like will be understood from the following extract :

"It has generally been the pride of Englishmen that they are free from those illiberal national prejudices by which most other countries are distinguished. It has been their boast that, although English artists have been maltreated by foreigners, the English public has made no reprisals. If the Parisians or the Belgians have misconducted themselves, it has not been considered a sufficient reason for Englishmen to misconduct themselves likewise. The doctrine is simple. If the foreign artist succeeds in pleasing enough people to enable him to pursue his profession in this metropolis, it is our custom to allow him to work on ; if he fails, we allow him to tumble into oblivion with equal nonchalance.

"Such, we thought, was English doctrine ; but some score of people, it seems, think otherwise. According to the apparent creed of these individuals it is a meritorious deed to hiss French actors, simply because they act in French, and to 'pre-damn' a French play



before the rising of the curtain, on purpose to show that it is neither the dulness nor the immorality of the production that offends them. This new school of 'protectionists' assembled last night within the walls of Drury Lane, which was opened for the performance of the play of 'Monte Cristo,' with the company from the Théâtre Historique of Paris, and got up the most disgraceful exhibition of illiberality that can be conceived. Were we not convinced that the conduct of these persons was regarded with disgust by the better portion of the audience, we should feel ashamed at the prospect of the Drury Lane disturbance being known to the residents of Paris.

"The 'row' we have to record is a stupid 'row,' not only showing the illiberality of the rioters, but their paucity of invention. In the old 'O. P.' affair, there was some humour. A good joke now and then found its way into the uproar; but here was a long, dull, dismal, dreary display of nationality which was effective from the mere fact that it was wearisome. "The 'row' was a 'slow' tiresome 'row.' One could not have conceived so much noise mixed up with a display of soporific character. Fussell would have despised such heavy *tapageurs*. The poor Frenchmen did all they could to conciliate this amiable specimen of the British public.

"They opened by playing 'God Save the Queen'; and when, two or three times afterwards, the rioters, who were loyal to a fault on this occasion, demanded a repetition of the anthem, they politely complied with the request. The plan of singing 'God Save the Queen' as a signal for uproar is borrowed from the old 'O. P.' days, and is another mark of the want of originality which signalised the proceedings of last

night. The rioters went on hallooing, hooting, whistling through their whistles, and uttering dull exclamations for upwards of three hours without any reason; and we wonder in what condition their lungs must be at the present moment.

"M. Jullien, as lessee of the house, attempted to restore order; but not a word of his speech was heard, and the noise pursued its dreary course to the termination of the piece. Some of the 'demonstrators' wore little placards which disfigured their hats, and which recorded something about the want of encouragement to the English drama in Paris. Two or three individuals in the pit thought it the height of humour to put up their umbrellas; but the police deemed it a still better joke to conduct these persons out of the house, which proceeding prevented a repetition of the pleasantries. A person in the boxes was going to take off his coat and fight somebody, and, thus, probably for the first time in his life, obtained applause.

"Never did we see a number of persons so busy in attempting to degrade themselves in the eyes of all rational beings. We have reason to think that some of these zealots, more worthy of better exploits than those of last night, were really persons of standing and respectability in the histrionic profession; and these, we are sure, when they rise this morning, will look with regret on the stupid scene of yesterday, and take especial care not to let their friends know they were concerned in such an exhibition.

"At the conclusion of the tedious 'riot,' the mob repeated their chant of 'God Save the Queen,' promised to repeat the 'row' on Wednesday (to-morrow) night, and gave three groans for Albert Smith. What this gentleman had to do with the affair, or why he incurred

this heavy penalty, we do not know; but we should certainly say that under the circumstances three groans were more flattering than three cheers would have been."

It is not surprising that Macready, at this time, by the public vote at all events, at the head of the profession, should have been mortified almost beyond expression at those miserable proceedings. Undertaken avowedly in the interests of the British drama, and in the name of Shakespeare himself, the riot at Drury Lane Theatre was as much an insult to the profession as an outrage on public morality; and Macready was not slow to give expression to his views on the subject.

On the 13th of June he wrote as follows to M. Hostein, the manager of the French company, with whom he had previously had an interview, and to whom he had expressed, in French, his "concern and indignation at the outrage offered them."

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,  
"13th June, 1848.

"SIR,—I have the greatest pleasure in assuring you of the grateful recollection I entertain, and shall always cherish, of the very flattering reception I met with in Paris, on the three several occasions of my making professional visits to that city. Not only on the stage and in society, but from very many artists of the various theatres in Paris, I experienced the most gratifying and liberal attentions. It is with equal pain and surprise I have heard of the disreputable proceedings at Drury Lane last night.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

W. C. MACREADY."

"À MONS. HOSTEIN."

It might have been supposed that nothing could have been better or more appropriate than this. Macready well knew the absurdity of the reciprocity cry. On three occasions he had appeared in Paris, and had been received with courtesy and kindness; and he was not the man to forget it. No man could more appropriately have expressed what should undoubtedly have been the feeling of the best among the English actors.

But this simple matter elicited an almost incomprehensible outburst of excitement and anger—an outburst that would be quite incomprehensible if the personal animosity against Macready, which was very prevalent in the profession, and the extraordinary jealousy with which he was regarded at that time, be not taken into consideration. Mathews at least could have had no grounds for jealousy; and it is absurd to suppose that a man of his antecedents and education could for one moment have believed in the "reciprocity" idea, or could have countenanced such action as was taken in its name. But somehow Mathews and Macready had always found it difficult to get on together.

The stupidity, if not malevolence, of an inventor and propagator of scandal, had carried to Mathews, while he was still at Covent Garden, an absurd story about Macready, on which Mathews's comments were more free than respectful. The vehemence with which Macready took up the cudgels, and the impetuosity with which Mathews accepted the challenge, for a long time obscured the real merits of the case.

It was not until reams of paper had been wasted, not until many hard words had been employed on both sides, and a great deal said that could never be

quite forgotten, that a little judicious examination into the facts by a cool-headed friend, and the subsequent confession of the original culprit, proved Macready to have been in the right throughout, and the words attributed to him to have been nothing but an infamous invention. Mathews, being in the wrong; frankly owned it, and the breach appeared to have been closed.

But later, when Madame Vestris and her husband were under the tragedian's management at Drury Lane, there were all sorts of difficulties—refusals on the lady's side to accept the parts allotted to her, fiery championship and outcries against the manager's tyranny from Mathews. It must have been a happy day for all three when the parting came.

No doubt a morbid recollection of these previous passages was in Mathews's mind when he consented to join the onslaught which was made upon Macready in this matter of the *Historique* company, and when he allowed his name to be used by Messrs. Hodgson and Burton, solicitors, who were employed to call Macready to account.

Why the intervention of solicitors was considered necessary on this occasion it is difficult to see. Perhaps it was because it was felt that a greater share of the responsibility of the extremely strong language that was to be used—and there is no mistake about its strength—would attach to the actual writers than to anybody else; and that whereas that sort of thing would naturally only come into the day's work of a solicitor, it might have serious consequences to others.

Macready's answer sufficiently indicates the tone of the questions addressed to him.

"20, WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS,

"June 17th, 1848.

"MESSRS. HODGSON AND BURTON.

"GENTLEMEN,—Upon my arrival here this evening your letter was delivered to me.

"You address me, I presume, as solicitors instructed by Messrs. Webster, C. Kean, C. Mathews, Farren, Harley, Buckstone, &c., &c., and numerous other performers, to inquire 'whether the words attributed to me by M. Hostein on the occasion of my visit of condolence to him, on what he states I called the disreputable conduct of my own countrymen, were actually uttered by me;' and, if so used, you ask the names of those members of the profession by whom I was authorised to make such protestation.

"You will allow me, in the first place, to observe that I do not admit the right of those gentlemen to make such inquiry of me; nor do I understand with what purpose you address those questions to me in their names; for, if not concerned in the disturbances referred to by me, my expressions, whatever they may have been, cannot apply to them; and if, directly or indirectly, implicated in the illegal and unworthy proceedings that took place at Drury Lane Theatre they rightfully fall under the remarks, however severe, of every lover of order and fair dealing.

"There seems to me also no reason why I should have been singled out, and exceptions taken to *my* observations on a public occurrence which has been commented upon without reserve, both by our daily press and in our Houses of Parliament!

"In a leading article of Friday's *Times* the parties engaged in this opposition are recorded as 'ruffians and blockheads, covering their country with disgrace in the eyes of Europe;' and by the nobleman who

spoke upon the petition in the House of Lords, 'the attempt to put down the performances at Drury Lane Theatre' was characterised as 'infamous,' 'barbarous,' 'illiberal,' 'disgusting,' 'discreditable,' &c. &c. These gentlemen certainly strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, whilst, under such expressions, they select *my* words for the object of their special inquisition !

"I will not, however, refuse you the satisfaction you seek. M. Hostein's letter I have not seen ; but, if correctly quoted by you, it conveys the full spirit of my conversation with him, though not reported in the precise words I used. I told him that I called on him to express the disgust and indignation which, as an Englishman and an artist, I felt on reading in that day's journals the disgraceful proceedings of the previous night. I replied to his questions, that I remembered with fervent gratitude my receptions in Paris on three several engagements ; adding that I deeply sympathised with him, and felt certain that every respectable actor, and the better part of my countrymen, did the same.

"This, the sum and substance of what I said, does not at all differ in sentiment from what you have quoted ; but it so happened that I did not make any formal 'protest' for myself, nor did I fall into the error of making it in the name of any one upon your list ; which, had it occurred to me, I might spontaneously have done, under—as it now appears—a mistaken impression in regard to those gentlemen's opinions.

"Your inquiry, I believe, is fully answered ; but, though loath to prolong this letter, I think it right to add, that I did not know for a certainty that either actors or authors were in combination to carry on those disturbances till informed so by M. Hostein. I was

even ignorant of the presentation of Mr. B. Webster's petition ; and when it was reported to me from Mr. Arthur Webster, that Mr. C. Kean had applied, or was applying, to the Lord Chamberlain against the French actors, I thought I was only doing that gentleman an act of justice in asserting most confidently my disbelief of the rumour. In this same spirit I assured M. Hostein of my firm convictions, giving others credit for what I myself believed and believe to be right. But, you tell me, there are 'numerous other members of the profession,' in addition to the list you have given, who disapprove 'the course I have adopted.'

"You, and perhaps they, will allow me to say, for the sake of that profession, I sincerely and deeply regret it ; but am not without hope and belief that there are very many English actors who participate in my sentiments, and who would, without hesitation, adopt the course condemned by your clients.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Your very obedient, humble servant,

"W. C. MACREADY."

Whatever may have been the judgment of the theatrical profession on the heated arguments, angry accusations, and bitter recriminations to which this unfortunate affair gave rise, there could have been but one opinion among the independent portion of the public as to who was, in principle at all events, in the right.

It is difficult in these times—when it has become common to see London theatres successfully managed by foreigners, when foreign artists compete with "native talent" in almost every branch of the profession, and when the transfer of the whole company of the Théâtre Français to the Gaiety Theatre is taken



quite as a matter of course—to understand how Macready's action should have been so misjudged, or how so great a storm should have been raised in so small a teacup. The reasons below the surface are not readily intelligible without a clue; but it was a very pretty quarrel as it stood, and, even after the letter of June 17th, there was an angry correspondence.

In the end, Macready, if only from having right on his side at first, certainly had the best of it. Whatever the result, the business was not one to make the name of Charles Mathews acceptable to French actors or to Parisian playgoers; but, all the same, he was most courteously received when he played "*Un Anglais timide*" in French and in Paris.

Thus you will see I entered the field of battle at a somewhat dangerous time for me. There was a prospect of a very tough fight indeed for any one who dared storm the citadel of protection.

Newspaper proprietors were as a rule obstinate in their endeavour to keep the English stage for the English alone; and the theatrical journals were prejudiced against the foreigners in every shape and form. True, Rachel had been seen in London, and Devrient, the great German Hamlet, but in a hole-and-corner way, at the St. James's Theatre, which was reserved for the aristocracy and the very few cultivated persons who knew, or indeed could speak, French or German.

The Macready and Charles Kean tradition, with all its worst faults and mannerisms, remained in a strutting, strident, "bow wow" school, headed by such second-class actors as T. C. King and Barry Sullivan.

As an actor, Barry Sullivan was unquestionably popular; his performance of Beverley, in "*The Gamester*," was a very fine one, and it is a play that one

would have thought that Henry Irving would have revived to his own personal advantage. Barry Sullivan worked the provinces admirably; he was sure of a reception everywhere, particularly in Liverpool and in Ireland; but London would not look at him, and when he took the Holborn Theatre to show himself as Hamlet, Romeo, and Claude Melnotte, failure was the result.

These doubtless earnest actors were supported with violence and acrimony by the old playgoers and the conservative newspapers. The younger generation wanted new blood, less declamation, more art, more taste, more nature. Some of us considered that a blend between the old English and the new French school would be a very admirable one; and we did not hesitate to say so. I scented the battle afar off, and it was not long before the crash came.

Augustus Harris, the father of Sir Augustus Harris, the lessee of Drury Lane, happened to be the manager of the Princess's Theatre when Charles Kean had virtually retired. He was a lively and very versatile man, an actor, an author, a manager, a first-class stage manager at theatre or opera, and passionately fond of Paris and the Parisian theatres. In Paris, Augustus Harris was attracted by the remarkable talent of a young actor, Charles Fechter, one of the best stage lovers and romantic actors I have ever seen on any stage. I grant the infinite charm of Delaunay and Bressant. I have admired, none more, the sympathetic skill of Leigh Murray, Harry Montague, Charles Coghlan and John Clayton; but in style, in fervour, in brilliancy and allurements they could not be compared with Fechter.

It is often thought, and frequently said, that Augustus Harris picked up in Paris a clever actor, but an unknown man. By no means. Fechter was the original

Armand Duval in "La Dame aux Camélias," who, with Doche, the original Marguérite Gautier, made the celebrated dramatic critic, Jules Janin, "weep like a calf," and own it into the bargain. There was some English blood in Charles Fechter's veins, and, as we all know, he was born in Hanway Yard (as it was then called), leading out of Oxford Street. At any rate, he learned acting in France, and was the most distinguished pupil of Frédéric Lemaître—the great Frédéric, whose traditions he closely followed.

Augustus Harris determined to run Fechter in London, and he started his career with *Ruy Blas*. A finer performance of the kind was never seen, glowing, tender, passionate, and tragic by turn. I have always said that the last act of "*Ruy Blas*" as played by Fechter was as good an example of well-timed effect in romantic drama as most of us have ever seen. It was electrical. The women in the audience sobbed over Fechter's love making; the men thrilled at the heroism of his melodrama.

But Augustus Harris had another card, and a trump one, to play. He determined that Fechter should act Hamlet in a new way, in a fresh style, with his own carefully considered new business; with a sweetly pathetic face showing the "fruitful river of the eye," and in a long flaxen Danish wig, in which, by the way, he had been anticipated years before by another celebrated French Hamlet.

"A Frenchman play Hamlet!" There was a yell of execration in the camp of the old school of playgoers, and the feathers began to fly. "Hamlet in a fair wig indeed! Hamlet in broken English!" Oh! you should have heard the shouts of indignation, the babble of prejudice! The upholders of the mouthing,



H. 100.



H. 101.



*Notes [y]*

Robert Macaire.

FECITER.

Ruy Blas. *[Adolphe Jean.]*



moaning, gurgling, Hamlets,—the Hamlets who disobeyed every precept in the advice to the players, and "imitated nature so abominably," the Hamlets who strutted and stormed,—held indignation meetings at their clubs, and metaphorically threw their "scratch wigs" into the air with rage and indignation!

I, of course, became the easiest convert to the new Fechter school, and elected to serve under his brilliant banner. In fact I will candidly own that I never quite understood Hamlet until I saw Fechter play the Prince of Denmark. Phelps and Charles Kean impressed me with the play; but with Fechter I loved the play, and was charmed as well as fascinated by the player.

Old stagers like John Oxenford and E. L. Blanchard were also converted, and to the support of Fechter the Frenchman came Charles Dickens, Edmund Yates, J. C. M. Bellew, Palgrave Simpson, and many more influential people. But Fechter was not only fantastic but powerful as well. The scene with Ophelia melted the audience to tears, the scene at Ophelia's grave was a wild mixture of infinite tenderness and passion; but from no other Hamlet have I heard the great speech, "Oh! what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" so superbly delivered. Fechter in his declamation always understood the art of "change" in style and inflection. His pauses of thought followed by a change of tone were wonderfully effective. There was a remarkable instance in the splendid speech—

"Am I a coward?

Who calls me Villain? breaks my pate across,  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,  
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i' the face  
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?  
Ha!  
Swounds! I should take it."

The pause of reflection, followed by, "I should take it" was admirable. I have never forgotten it.

Fechter's Hamlet having proved so brilliant a success, and the discussion concerning it causing such a commotion, it was decided to try more Shakespeare at the Princess's.

"Othello" was the next venture, and it was arranged that Fechter and John Ryder should alternate the characters of Othello and Iago.

John Ryder, who had been the faithful lieutenant of Macready and Charles Kean, kicked a bit at first, and, as was his wont, used some very violent language at the expense of the —— Frenchman. But all the same Fechter taught Ryder how to play Iago, and Ryder had the candour and honesty to own it; and when the night came, Ryder, the Englishman, got the better of the Frenchman, for Fechter's Othello was not to be highly commended. He introduced some startling business, which was soon burlesqued by Jemmy Rogers at the Strand Theatre. In the bedchamber scene, Fechter illustrated the line—

"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul"

by taking up Desdemona's handglass off her dressing table and looking at his black face.

However, when Fechter played Iago he turned the tables completely on John Ryder, and, as the saying is, "wiped the floor with him." The Iago of Fechter was a brilliant performance. I have seen Henry Irving and Edwin Booth as Iago, and they were difficult to beat. But I think I lean to the Iago of Charles Fechter.

As to Othello, of course I have only seen one pre-eminently the best, the Othello of Thomaso Salvini.

What a voice, what a style, what gentleness, what strength, what an astounding creation! Some may object to the impulse of kicking Iago before Othello lifted the wretch to his feet, some may regret the Italian method of Othello's death; but let me ask who has ever seen Othello before or since? And then the youngsters ask me, "Why, if some new Othello is good enough for them, is it not good enough for me?" For the very good reason that I have seen a better, that is all. I am not prejudiced: if ever I see a better Othello than Salvini I shall say so. Unluckily, I have seen some Othellos a thousand times worse.

Next to Salvini I should put G. V. Brooke—although he was almost a wreck when I saw him—and Charles Warner.

Charles Fechter had evidently come to stay, and he was destined to be an actor manager, somewhat jealous and crotchety; but he had a brilliant career at the Lyceum, which was done up for him with a lovely lace curtain, or, rather, one prettily painted to imitate lace.

Those were happy days for me with Fechter in power and his faithful "Humph" Barnett in front of the house. He was a dear old man, a model acting manager of the old school, who knew the ropes thoroughly. Humphrey Barnett simply idolised Fechter, and whenever things went a bit wrong, his faithful henchman was able to find a bit of money to pay the treasury on Saturday; for erratic actor managers, who want their own way, and have it, are often a bit out in their reckoning.

"Humph" Barnett had a wonderful reputation for skill in papering a house. At that time it was the custom of the lower middle classes to go to the play in burnous, as they were called, or little hooded scarlet cloaks lined with white satin or swansdown,



and with white silk gloves with a bit of elastic at the wrist. It was said,—at any rate that was the story of Charles Mathews who, enjoyed the joke,—that Barnett had in every district in London, mothers and daughters, dressed, ready and waiting to be fetched in cabs to the Lyceum in order to fill the house when business was bad. These were called in the profession “Humphs.” So that when any one entered the theatre and ventured to remark, “A splendid house, isn’t it?” his companion would look round, spot the scarlet cloaks with their white “Thibet” tasselled hoods dotted about the theatre, and say, “Oh dear no! Full of Humphs!”

Nowadays, acting managers in the same predicament send for boy messengers, and distribute gratis tickets at the doors of the wealthy, the well dressed and the showy, for they are bound to “paper” their houses with fashionable people.

Yes, they were delightful days at the Lyceum, when Fechter played romantic drama with the assistance of Kate Terry, the loveliest of young girls; of Sam Emery, father of Winifred, a splendid actor; of John Brougham and George Jordan, both from America, and of Widdicombe, the drollest of comedians—what a First Grave-digger and Jacques Strop!—and of Miss Elsworthy, a “grande dame” of great distinction and beauty.

With such a company we saw “The Duke’s Motto”; “Bel Demonio, a Love Story”; and delighted in such acting in romantic drama as the English stage has never seen since. The recent Dumas and Musketeer craze could not compare with the era of Fechterian romance at the Lyceum. In addition to new plays, of course there were revivals of “Hamlet,” “The Lady of Lyons,” “The Corsican Brothers,” “Belphegor,” “Robert Macaire,” &c., in which Fechter was without a rival;

but in the end the speculation at the Lyceum ended in smoke.

The last time that Fechter appeared in London was at the Adelphi, where he made an enormous hit as Obenreizer in "No Thoroughfare," a play dramatised by Wilkie Collins from his story of the same name written in collaboration with Charles Dickens for the Christmas number of "All the Year Round." Equally excellent was Benjamin Webster as Joey Ladle, the old cellarman, a masterpiece of observant acting in its way. In the cast also were John Billington, George Belmore, Carlotta Leclercq, and Mrs. Alfred Mellon.

It was said of Fechter that, with all his talent, amiability, charm of manner, he was of uncertain temper, and that he continually and consistently quarrelled with all his best friends. He was always quarrelling and making it up again with Charles Dickens, Palgrave Simpson, Edmund Yates, Wilkie Collins; and certain it is that he quarrelled disastrously with poor old "Humph" Barnett, and the estrangement helped to break the heart of a very faithful and devoted friend. Success, I fear, was too much for Charles Fechter, and those who would not estimate him at his own worth were instantly his enemies.

Still, I speak of a man as I find him, and to me he was nothing but kindness and consideration at all times. I remember once in 1868 I wrote to him to say that I was going to Paris and wanted to look round all the theatres, and to interview the celebrities he knew. He took the trouble to write me at least a dozen charming autograph letters, all varied, all breathing a spirit of comradeship, all excellent. I wish they were all in my possession now. Still I have preserved one, characteristic of the rest. It is addressed to the famous actor

Laray, who was then playing Buridan in the "Tour de Nesle."

Here it is :



28 avril 68

Laray, mon vieux; fais  
voir la Tour de Nesle, et  
ton Buridan, à Mr. Clemens  
Scott, un critique anglais,  
et ami à moi; qui veut  
rendre compte des theatres  
de Paris.

Un ancien patron.

H. Fechter.

Among the letters of introduction given to me at that time by Fechter was one addressed to the great Alexandre Dumas, the author of "Monte Cristo," the father of the author of "Le Dame aux Camélias."

Yes, I have seen and spoken to the brilliant author of "The Three Musketeers."

I presented my letter of course, and called. It was a strange experience for a youth. Alexandre Dumas

lived with his daughter, a very devout Catholic, in a fashionable quarter of Paris. The daughter was evidently away, and when I left my card and Fechter's letter I was ushered into a solemn room, which looked like an oratory, being full of crucifixes, relics and sacred pictures. After waiting some time in astonishment, for the religious atmosphere did not seem to coincide with my idea of the rollicking historian, novelist and prolific dramatist, the servant returned to say that M. Dumas would see me.

From the oratory I was ushered into a kind of kitchen. The scene had changed entirely. Behold the hero of hundreds of dramatic successes, in his shirt sleeves, his negro skin beaded with perspiration, his hair like an iron-grey scrubbing brush reversed, sitting before the fire, with a pretty girl on each knee, pretending to cook an omelette or preside over a *vol au vent* !

Dumas, as every one knows, was an amateur cook, and he loved nothing better than to design, arrange and carry out a dinner of his own invention. The girls pinched him, kissed him, chaffed him, and called him "Papa." He returned the compliment. He asked me about Fechter and his success, which interested him. He gave me some tickets for the theatre, and I left the cheery old man, still in his shirt sleeves sitting before the stove, kissing the pretty girls on either knee.

This was the first and last time that I saw Alexandre Dumas.

Soon after that Charles Fechter left London and England for America, where he made an enormous success. The ladies of America liked his love-making as ours did in England, and they could not fail to admire his charm and enthusiastic style. But, like so many more men whom women have passionately loved, he drifted and drifted and drifted. He left the stage and

took to farming, became, so I am told, an enormous size ; and the idol of the women of three countries, the friend of some of our greatest literary men, died alone in distant America and comparatively neglected.

These are the celebrated Joseph Jefferson's impressions of Charles Fechter. The kindly and generous American critic is right in assuming that Frédéric Lemaître was the god of Fechter's idolatry. He told me so himself, and I always understood that he studied under and moulded his style on the great master.

“While acting my first engagement at the Boston Theatre I met Charles Fechter. By terms of my agreement it was arranged that I should give five nights' performance and a *matinée* each week, Fechter playing only on Saturday night. I had not seen him act since my visit to France in 1855, so that I had an opportunity of witnessing his performance here some three or four times. His Claude Melnotte and Don César were unquestionably the best I had ever seen. The arrangement of his dramatic pictures was graceful and unconventional.

“William Warren, Charles Fechter, and I were living at the same house during my engagement in Boston, and usually met at supper after the play. This is not only the witching time of night for an actor, but it affords a golden hour for theatrical chat. Charles Fechter was a most agreeable and entertaining man. He had a rich fund of theatrical anecdotes relating to the French stage, and told them with excellent dramatic effect. Frédéric Lemaître was an especial favourite with him, and it struck me from what he said in relation to him that his own style of acting was founded upon that of his idol.

"I think Fechter was less greedy of public approbation than he was of the applause of his brother actors; he seemed to delight in portraying scenes from his different characters before them. William Warren and I made an excellent audience on such occasions, as we not only thought highly of his artistic qualities, but were naturally interested in the great actors of the French stage, of whom we had heard so much and seen comparatively so little.

"His description of Lemaître in the character of Belphegor was wonderfully graphic. I think Warren and I were the only ones present on the occasion of this illustration. He acted it to the life. We were deeply interested; and he, catching, I suppose, the spirit of our appreciation, became enthusiastic. The art was so fine and the feeling so intense that we seemed to be looking at the scene. The gardens of the château, the fine company supposed to be assembled, were not required to give life to the acting. He addressed the imaginary guests with such force that they seemed to stand before us. As the mountebank, with his starving child clinging to him, weakened from the want of food, with tears choking his utterance, he carried us completely away. And when in a burst of grief he caught his fainting boy in his arms I think we were both in tears.

"In this respect Fechter seems to have somewhat resembled Garrick, who, we are told, was as entertaining off the stage as he was on it. This peculiar faculty has given rise to the rather unjust suspicion that Garrick was not so great an actor as his biographers would make us believe. There is no doubt that many great actors are unable to become sufficiently enthused to act well off the stage, and there are some very indifferent ones who can act privately with considerable effect: but

there is no reason why artists may not possess both faculties."

Strange to say, Belphegor in "The Mountebank" was not one of Fechter's greatest successes. It was not considered as good as the Belphegor of Charles Dillop, which was a masterpiece. But Fechter loved to play the part, for he introduced to the stage as the child his lovely little boy, Paul Fechter. He also welcomed to the Lyceum stage, on the 17th of April, 1865, in the character of Madeline, Belphegor's wife, Mdle. Beatrice (Marie Beatrice Binda), a charming artist and a very popular actress. She died on the 2nd of December, 1878.

## CHAPTER XIV

### “THE DAWN OF THE RENAISSANCE”

WE have arrived, step by step, steadily and by slow degrees, at the year 1865, which is a landmark in the history of the English stage during the Victorian Era.

As to the stage itself of that day I can only compare it to a huge and valuable ship, tossing about on the stormy waves of public opinion, rudderless, helpless at the mercy of fate. As the children say in their games, “Here we go up, up, up!” and “Here we go, down, down, down!” The great and valuable dramatic ship was in exactly the same condition. It was a toss up whether this drama of ours, which was always “going to the dogs,” would take itself off to them and virtually be worried to death.

The simile of the rudderless ship, to which might be added one of an ill-disciplined army, seems correct in that the stage existed then, as it ever must exist; but it lived from hand to mouth, and the worst of it was it had no leader.

The Kembles were heroes of the past; Macready was living in retirement at Cheltenham, a conscientious recluse; Helen Faucit had virtually retired; the reign of the Charles Keans was over for ever; Samuel Phelps was a wandering star, always welcome wherever he



appeared, but with no little kingdom of his own to govern, at Sadler's Wells or elsewhere.

The stage had no leader ; the star of the future had not even twinkled in the dramatic sky, or been able to pierce through the murky clouds. Henry Irving had not yet come from the country and appeared for the second time in London. Managers there were, naturally held in great respect, not only for their individual talent, but for the esteem in which they were regarded ; but for the most part they were "in the sere, the yellow leaf," with no energy left with which to tackle the spirit of decay and decadence all round, devoting such energies as they had to flaunting the last old rags of the protectionist policy, and denying freedom to the music-hall and variety theatre.

Again and again Benjamin Webster, J. Baldwin Buckstone, F. B. Chatterton, and the other protectionists, obstinately opposed to any free trade in art, sent out private informers, and hauled up offending music-hall proprietors and managers for giving on their stages anything that was in any way dramatic, any sketch that told a story, any duologue that had any sense in it, any ballet to which might be attached a tale, fortifying themselves with an old Act of Parliament, passed in the reign of George the Second, long before music-halls, as we understand them, were born or thought of.

But, not content with oppressing those who were perfectly aware that the public taste was ripening to something far better, they obstinately refused to set their own houses in order.

It did not trouble their consciences that by refusing liberty to the music-hall, they were lowering and degrading public taste, compelling a man who liked a glass and a cigar or pipe with his pleasure, to listen to

inane and often filthy songs, and reducing the variety programme, so far as variety was concerned, to a perfect farce. Tumblers, yes; trapezists, yes; comic singers, blatant and strident, with a certain dogged power but no humour—yes, of course! But when sensible, gifted, far-seeing men, like Charles Morton, who, in those distant times, had visions of such a splendid establishment as our Palace Theatre of Varieties exists to-day, and earnestly desired to help all classes, from the artisan to the art lover, out came the obstructionists, with their Georgian Act of Parliament, and their patents and privileges and protection, and said:

"Here stands a post!"

"Who put it there?" naturally asked Charles Morton and his enthusiastic friends.

The obvious answer came:

"A better man than you! Touch it if you dare!"

Charles Morton has proved himself a "better man" than any of them, for at the honourable age of eighty he finds the good work of his life crowned with success; his principles universally adopted; the lighter pleasures of the people made decent; and free trade established on a firm rock from which it is never likely to be removed.

The dog in the manger policy of protection was obviously a short-sighted one. Free trade was bound to come, sooner or later. But some excuse might have been found for the dogs in the manger if they had only jumped down and allowed some one else to clean out the stable over which they barked so furiously.

They would not allow any one to wash out the music-hall, and they refused to litter down their own stables.

Shakespeare was in the hands of Chatterton at Drury Lane, who no doubt spent a great deal of money, but who spent it in the wrong way; and when the money was gone he ascribed his own deficiency and want of tact to the bad taste of the public. "Shakespeare spells ruin, and Byron bankruptcy!" As a matter of fact the public never had a chance of showing whether its taste was good or bad. They had to accept what was provided for them, and only wondered it was so indifferent as it turned out to be.

No encouragement whatever was given to authors of talent, to rising men, to coming men, to lights that might have shone. Robertson—the best fellow in the world, once an actor, one of a splendid histrionic family, who knew the stage from boyhood,—with a heart almost broken with neglect, turned cynic in despair.

The stage was deluged with adaptations from the French, the first charge of which cost nothing. There was no Berne Convention in those days; and if any one wanted to reproduce D'Ennery, or Octave Feuillet, or Dumas, or Sardou, all he had to do was to send over to Paris for the book, which cost a couple of francs. Those who had defiant industry and the pens of the ready writer were well employed. Original writers were perpetually snubbed; and Tom Taylor, a very able writer, and as quick as lightning, was glad enough to accept £150 down for the most successful melodrama of our time, "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," because it was adapted, and very well adapted too, from a fine play by Brisbarre and Nus, called "Leonard," and went cheap for the very good reason that there was no protection for stolen goods, and any manager could employ a hack writer to give him another version of "Leonard."

In fact, Robertson, with all his genius, was in his des-



KATE TERRY.



ELLEN TERRY.



*Photos by*

KATE TERRY

*J. Adolphe Beau*



peration almost wholly employed by old Lacy, the theatrical bookseller in the Strand, to retransalate West-End successes of French plays for East-End and transpontine theatres.

Lucky indeed for the Pineros and Joneses and Cartons, and Grundys of to-day, that they were born later on, or, like Robertson, their hearts might have been broken too, when they saw theatre after theatre devoting its attention to the semi-translations, semi-adaptations of Oxenford, Bayle Bernard, Stirling Coyne, Leicester Buckingham—all dramatic critics—while Robertson railed aloud, and Gilbert growled.

So some of us,—when the dramatic difficulty became worse and worse; when intellectual men and women were leaving the theatre in disgust, and removing their patronage from the playhouse; when the drama had fallen from its pedestal, and was neglected in the dust,—put our backs to the wall, and determined to fight it out. We could all do something, if ever so little.

Gilbert, with his bright, mordant, and satirical pen, could lash week after week in *Fun* the wretched plays of that time, the miserable scenery, the tomfool dresses, the "Adelphi guests," the "Adelphi moon," and the banalities of a neglected and degraded stage.

Herman Merivale, with his bright genius, his scholarly style, his faultless prose and his elegant verse, came enthusiastically to the rescue, and advanced from light farce, in which "Jack" Clayton, another young enthusiast, assisted him by his acting and his artistic sympathy, to the dignity of "All for Her," and the beautiful and poetic "White Pilgrim."

W. G. Wills, a new recruit in the young army of literary and artistic volunteers, joined the forces of a better Bohemia, and was in his "salad days" taken in

hand by Hermann Vezin, for whom he adapted, at Vezin's suggestion, a German drama by Carl von Hoëlt, called "The Man o' Airlie," one of the finest things Vezin ever did, and a play that started the reputation of the young Irish artist, poet, and dramatist,—never, I think, appreciated at his proper worth. If Sheridan Knowles was a stage poet, where shall we rank W. G. Wills, who wrote "Charles the First," "Eugene Aram," "Olivia," but perhaps best of all in a literary sense, "Medea"—written for and successfully played by Miss Bateman?

Experienced authors, actors and lovers of the stage, such as Palgrave Simpson, Arthur Sketchley, and Charles Mathews, never neglected to give us a helping hand. Lewis Wingfield, Frederick Leighton, and many more, helped the good cause in society.

The law stood firm with the artistic movement as represented by Charles Russell, John Holker, Leofric Temple, W. R. McConnell, Montagu Williams, Douglas Straight, and in after years Frank Lockwood, and "Willie" Matthews, son of our brave and bright and cheery champion, "Mrs. Charley."

Joe Knight, who succeeded me on the *Sunday Times* as dramatic critic, stood firm as a rock. He was a bulwark and tower of strength, and gave splendid aid in directing attention to the study of French, and indeed all foreign art in whatever country recognised.

Young and inexperienced as I was in the art of dramatic warfare, I could only act as a skirmisher and sharp-shooter, sheltered sometimes by the shield of journalism, often ordered out into the open to be shot at unprotected.

Because I would not yield to protectionist coercion, because I ventured to praise French actors and French acting when they were good, because I could not recognise

the value of some of the fossils whom it was heresy to decry, because I was the *bête noire* of the Chatterton and George Vining party, who did not want criticism, hungered for praise, and writhed at any independent tone, I was sent from pillar to post. The government in power was too strong for me, four and thirty years ago. The public was with me, the profession against me!

History has repeated itself to-day, even when the tables were completely turned: the public has never deserted me; I leave the profession and its professors one and all to their own conscience. I have helped them more than they have helped me. I never turned against them. The rest is history; but no independent critic in the year 1865 could have existed for an hour without the occasional shelter of the journalistic shield.

The *Sunday Times* was the official organ of a professional trades union. What support could I expect there? I was bound to fall. Independence in a theatrical journal was, of course, out of the question. The loss of an advertisement or so, or even the threat of taking it away, meant the dismissal of a dramatic critic.

Still, on the whole, I have been bravely supported in the hour of need, loyally protected against adverse influence in this guerilla warfare in which I have been continually engaged,—I hope with some advantage to the art I loved in boyhood, and love better still in the evening of my life.

Naturally I look back with pride to my staunch supporters, who would countenance no interference whatever, to George Emerson of the *Weekly Dispatch*, who, when Chatterton of Drury Lane threatened to withdraw



his advertisements and influence if I were not dismissed and a new representative of the paper appointed, was answered :

“Take away your advertisements. We stand by our man !”

That was a bold policy, I assure you, in 1865, even for so liberal a journal as the *Dispatch*.

And as the years went on I and my other independent *confrères* needed more and more help.

I received it from James Mortimer, the editor and proprietor of the *London Figaro*, in which paper, as “Almaviva,” I was a free lance indeed. I received it from Edward Dicey, the editor of the *Observer* ; and I received it in full and generous measure from my old friend, Mr. J. M. Levy of the *Daily Telegraph*, who never went back from his word, or his man, if he believed in him.

It was a sorrow, no doubt, to lose the *Sunday Times*, to be able no more to mount that rickety staircase to the printing office in Exeter Street, Strand, where I found Cockerell, the kindly sub-editor, in charge, ever ready to give me good advice ; and the intelligent printers, the brothers Crane, who took notes for me at the minor theatres which I was bound to notice, but could not attend to, so wide was the area, even in those days, for one man. I regretted severing from H. N. Barnett, the Unitarian editor, whom I never saw in business, and Joseph Bennett, the musical critic, and Ashby Sterry, the genial “Rambler,” and many more.

But I bowed to the inevitable, and accepted with pleasure the cordial handshake of Joseph Knight, who came to the War Office to tell me that the *Sunday Times* had no further need of my services, and that he had been appointed in my place. It was not his fault,

he urged. He had no wish or desire to supplant any one. But he had been asked to take the post, and took it. He could not afford to refuse it.

So we met and parted the best of friends, and so we have remained ever since. He taught me to sit up to the "wee sma' hours;" but at that game he has checkmated me. I gave in first. I don't think he ever will. He is incorrigible, the champion "sitter up" of his time. "Good Knight," as he has ever been called by his innumerable friends.

There was one man who, so far as I know, never received sufficient credit for his silent, earnest and always unobtrusive work in connection with the sudden and startling reform in stage matters that dates from the opening of the little Prince of Wales Theatre off the Tottenham Court Road under the management of Marie Wilton—afterwards Mrs. Bancroft—and Henry James Byron.

That man was Tom Hood.

This may sound a startling statement, but, all the same, it is true.

"What," you will ask, "had Tom Hood to do with it?" He was not much of a playgoer, he did not write plays, he did not criticise them, he had a terribly hard time of it working all day at the War Office, Pall Mall, and sitting up more than half the night writing novels, stories, poems, and preparing the weekly issue of *Fun*,—how could he have any direct or indirect influence on the history of the modern stage?

Direct influence certainly not; indirect influence most assuredly. I happened to be behind the scenes, and I am bound now to give the credit that was certainly due to my dead friend, who was a model of loyalty, and the earnest advocate of good fellowship all round.

Tom Hood, young as he was, had an enormous influence with the energetic young. He was earnest in all he did.

He was very poor, as we all were ; but Tom Hood conceived the idea—how the youngsters would laugh at it to-day !—of gathering round him once every week at a supper provided by him at his little home in South Street, Brompton Road, all who had their heart in whatever work they attempted, and for which they were most qualified.

Tom Hood's Friday Nights became a great, and, I think, a valuable institution. Assisted by his good-natured and enthusiastic wife, we were provided every Friday with a plain old-fashioned supper of cold roast beef, salad, bread and cheese, potatoes in their jackets, and whatever we wanted to drink or smoke in reason.

This was something like a sacrifice to the pocket of a hard-working, struggling literary man. But he did it, proud and glad to be of service to all who intended to make their mark in life if they could.

It was a kind of very humble literary salon ; but how much better here, with this band of brothers, these staunch determined "pals," who "rolled logs" for one another and helped each other in need, than wasting our time and substance in the alluring cafés of the Haymarket, at the casinos and dancing rooms or at the card table ! Poker and nap and solo whist and "Bridge" were unknown. They would not, under any circumstances, have been permitted or even suggested at Tom Hood's Friday Nights.

We came to talk literature, to discuss the books we had read, or the plays we had seen, to hear good music, to crack jokes, to tell good stories and to plan out papers and periodicals, destined, of course, to make the fortunes

of all of us, which doubtless would have been the case had any of us possessed one farthing of capital.

We all of us lived from hand to mouth I fear, and, alas ! could never find our capitalist. Here, round Tom Hood's hospitable table, such wits and wags as W. S. Gilbert, W. J. Prowse, Harry Leigh and Arthur Sketchley would set the table on a roar ; here up in the little drawing-room after supper Jemmy Molloy and Paul Gray would "discourse most exquisite music ;" here Tom Robertson would enchant us with his pathetic stories of the stage, and inveigh against the manager, whether actor or not it did not much matter ; here Escott led us to higher literature and recited his favourite poems ; here Jack Brough talked chemistry, and E. C. Barnes art ; and when the new day was breaking we went eastward with the market carts up Piccadilly, and felt all of us that we had not at least wasted the one day that we all valued in the busy week.

But how could a weekly gathering of young enthusiasts of different and various occupations, have any influence on the drama with which so few were connected, for I do not remember to have met many actors or managers at Tom Hood's Friday Nights ?

Well, it was in a roundabout fashion. Tom Hood, as I have told you, was an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Oxford, with one Fletcher, the brilliant cynic—the very counterpart of Frederic Sandys the artist, who was one of our Bohemian body-guard. Fletcher married a sister of Marie Wilton, who was much interested in our set. And we all believed heart and soul in the "coming on disposition" of at least two of our companionship, Tom Robertson and W. S. Gilbert.

I really do not believe that such a feeling as jealousy or envy existed in this little coterie.

I shall be told that the competition was not so swift or keen then, as it is to-day; but it was quite swift enough to take some of us off our feet in the current at times. Still, if one looked like drowning, the other flung off his clothes and jumped in to the rescue. When Tom Robertson could not do his "Theatrical Lounger," in the dear old *Illustrated Times*, he handed it over to Gilbert; when Gilbert was too busy he passed it on to me; when I wanted a holiday, the *Sunday Times*, with all its attendant difficulties, was the perquisite of Gilbert. In fact, we rolled logs for one another, and so we built our encampment. I wish the journalists did a little more log rolling now!

Great therefore were our excitement and interest when we heard that Marie Wilton and Henry James Byron had taken the little "dust hole" in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, and intended to turn it into a fashionable playhouse.

The Queen's Theatre was originally established in 1810, when a license was given to one Paul, a retired pawnbroker, persuaded thereto by his wife, who was anxious to go on the stage, and was opened on Easter Monday, April 23rd, 1810, as the King's Ancient Concert Rooms, with a burletta called "The Village Fête," founded on "Love in a Village," really the opera itself; Mrs. Paul was the Rosetta.

The speculation was not successful, Paul lost all his money; and in 1821 Mr. Brunton became manager. He was a fair actor, and his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Yates, played the leading rôles. S. Beverley then followed as manager. Frédéric Lemaître, the brilliant French melodramatic actor—le Grand Frédéric—made his début in this country here, the theatre being then known as the Regency, and was afterwards again



STELLA COLAS.

*Photo by*

*[Adolphe Beau.*



LYDIA THOMPSON.

*("I couldn't help it." By John Oxenford.)*



*Photo by*

MRS. BANCROFT AS LADY TEAZLE.

*[Windore & Co.]*



entitled the West London Theatre, the name Brunton gave it when he opened the house in 1829.

It was called the Queen's, in compliment to Queen Adelaide, on the accession of William IV. Messrs. Chapman and Melrose were managers in 1830, Macfarren in 1831, and a noticeable performance of "Acis and Galatea" was given, with E. Seguin, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Humby, T. Green, and Mr. Tilbury.

In December, 1833, the theatre was called the Fitzroy, and was run by some members of the Mayhew family. Gilbert Abbot A'Beckett and Henry Mayhew (under the title of "Ralph Rigmarole") being the two authors to the theatre.

It came under Mrs. Nisbett's management in 1835, who called it the Queen's again. Then Colonel Addison, with Mrs. Waylett as directress, and George Wild, tried to make the house pay, but without success.

In 1839, Charles James, the well-known scenic artist, took up the management, and contrived for twenty-six years, up to the time of its passing into the hands of the Bancrofts, to obtain some income from it.

The plan of campaign determined on by Marie Wilton and H. J. Byron at the outset was not very ambitious. It was merely a replica of the old and favourite programme at the merry little Strand. Byron was to write the burlesques for Marie Wilton and the comediettas for the cleverest little company that could be found—and they were to share the profits.

The account of the early struggles of the plucky little manageress; of her nailing up curtains in the private boxes within a few minutes of the admission of the public; of her determination to direct a bijou theatre; of her desire, which was so creditably carried out, that the management should in future supply the dresses, and



that the "rag-bag" system that obtained elsewhere should cease for ever—have all been so well described by Lady Bancroft in her own admirable book, that I will only now allude to the company she gathered round her, mainly of old friends of other days.

From the Strand she brought Fanny Josephs, one of the most refined, lady-like and charmingly dressed actresses of her day, and one universally beloved. She was the child of an acting family. Her father was an actor, and her sister, Patti Josephs, was a clever actress at the St. James's Theatre in the days of Miss Herbert. John Clarke, the misanthrope, came with her, and Harry Cox, a splendid dancer. Fred Dewar and old Dyas, the father of Ada Dyas, also an admirable actress, were safe cards to play, for they brought experience as well as talent.

But this diplomatic little lady did not rely wholly upon old hands. She scoured the provinces for talent, and she brought up to London Miss Lilian Hastings, from the Bath and Bristol Theatres; Miss Bella Goodall, from the Theatre Royal, Liverpool; and, most notable of all, from the same Liverpool theatre, Sidney Bancroft, destined to be the right hand of Marie Wilton, as her husband, in her projected stage reforms, destined indeed to be the most far-seeing, business-like, practical, and common-sense manager of our time; destined by his own merit and modesty, tact, far-sightedness and equable temper, to come to the very top of the tree.

The first programme, dated 15th of April, 1865, consisted of two light pieces, Wooler's "Winning Hazard" and Troughton's farce "Vandyke Brown," with, for the attraction of the evening, Byron's burlesque extravaganza, "La Sonnambula; or The Supper, The Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy."

At that time there was no dream, or thought, of Tom Robertson, or the wildest hope of such a play as "Caste" in prospect. Burlesque of an old-fashioned pattern, comedietta, farce,—that was to be the Prince of Wales's programme.

• All went very well for a time, and everything gave great satisfaction at the little bijou playhouse, except the programme. Visitors accustomed to dingy, dirty, uncomfortable theatres, as bad, if not worse, than the ordinary Paris theatres of to-day, were enchanted with the light, bright, joyous little playhouse, always compared to a blue quilted "bon-bon" box, where the very walls of the theatre seemed to welcome you, as they do to-day in the theatres of America.

I am certain that Marie Wilton, who graduated at the Strand, would never have encouraged that modern, and to my mind detestable, invention, the darkened theatre, where you have to grope your way to your seat as in a cellar, tumbling over people's feet, causing muttered imprecations, unable at any time to read the programme, it is so dark; and hearing in the orchestra not some lively air to put you in good spirits, but minor melodies and mournful dirges, wailing up from the catacombs. These darkened theatres may focus the light upon the scene, but they make a sensitive audience intensely wretched and depressed.

There was nothing of this sort at the model drawing-room theatre in 1865, where a merry, smiling, courteous hostess cheerfully received her happy guests. The playhouse was voted an enormous success; the young, good-looking, well-dressed actors and actresses on the stage were a change indeed after the "Adelphi guests," and the old fossils who persisted in playing young

lovers and dashing sparks when they were rapidly qualifying for the rôle of grandfather.

The want of a bright, natural, observant dramatist was the "crux." To tell the truth, Marie Wilton in her heart wanted to glide gracefully out of burlesque, and to advance to that comedy for which she was born and conspicuously endowed by nature. Her partner, Henry J. Byron, on the other hand, did not care to give up writing burlesques, and certainly did not desire to lose his "trump card" in that form of entertainment.

The question was settled by Byron's constitutional restlessness and indecision. He was the most charming of companions, but the weakest of men.

At last he was hopelessly involved in theatrical speculations at Liverpool, he neglected his interests in the Tottenham Court Road; and a dissolution of partnership by mutual and friendly consent was agreed upon.

In this predicament the plucky little woman was virtually stranded. How to find a manager, and how to find a dramatist. Fate settled both, to the satisfaction of everybody. That handsome young actor from Liverpool, who had been through the mill in the provinces, and who, in addition to being an enthusiast in his art, was a first-class man of business, proposed to and was accepted by his boyhood's love—Marie Wilton; and Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft have played together ever since most admirably in the world-known comedy, "Partners for Life."

It was the happiest circumstance, as the glad sequel has amply proved. They have retired, with dignity and honour, in the prime of their lives; they, by their own individual efforts, have made themselves free at least from worldly care; they were the chief movers in that stage reform that was so imperatively demanded; and

their names, as well as the splendid work they did, both at the Prince of Wales Theatre and afterwards at the Haymarket, for English original comedy, for French adapted comedy, and for classic comedy, should never be forgotten. Indeed, it should always be insisted on to their everlasting credit, and brought forward as a solemn and solid fact, in opposition to those who so strangely maintain that the reform, of which we are all so proud, and for which we are so deeply grateful, did not start four and thirty years ago, but the day before yesterday.

The dramatist destined to give light and life and colour to the Marie Wilton scheme was discovered in Tom Robertson, the neglected, cynical, and well-nigh broken-hearted man. He had been snubbed, passed by, and passed over by men with not a tenth of his talent; he had written, years before, a farce called "The Cantab" for the Strand. He had squeezed himself into notice, with the kindly aid of Ned Sothorn, with his ever popular play, "David Garrick," based on a French drama, "Sullivan," which Robertson, despairing of success on the stage, had turned into a novel; but, although things were looking more rosy for poor Tom after his Haymarket success, his chance came when he was generously taken by the hand by Marie Wilton and encouraged to "go in and win."

Seldom were two artistic minds so admirably brought into sympathy. Robertson had a profound belief in the genius of the actress; Marie Bancroft not only was enthusiastic about Robertson's talent, but had the great gift of being able to draw out, and encourage, the best points of his sensitive and affectionate temperament, ever alive in his work, but deadened a little with the rough treatment of the world which had not dealt too kindly to him. These two were bound to work well

together. The appreciation and applause that Robertson required, Marie Bancroft freely gave. A hint from her was enough for him.

How much does success in life depend on this personal sympathy! Some of us do our best work encouraged with a pat on the back; but the lash makes us as obstinate as mules. Some want the whip and the spur; others are guided by the voice and a kindly word. Robertson was one of these last.

I can well believe that at school a look of encouragement and sympathy would have sent him to the top of the class; a sneer or a snub would have kept him hopelessly at the bottom. Schoolmasters seldom know what power they have to make or to ruin character in early youth.

Let me own that I was a case in point! Towards the end of my career at Marlborough, as ill luck would have it, fate destined that I should have as a form-master one who took the most marked dislike to me. He persisted in snubbing me and ridiculing me before the whole class, and by his constant cruelty and unfairness deliberately worked my nerves into a pulp or jelly, driving out of my poor head every idea that I had ever tried to get into it.

When this tyrant and destroyer of character went away, and handed his duties over to another master, or some scholar from one of the Universities, I recovered as a young plant does under sunshine.

I remembered my "repetition"; construed with, I think, some fluency; and was encouraged to turn Horace's Odes into verse, and to try to do the same for the Georgics of Virgil or the Greek play at which I was at work.

Exercise after exercise went up to the head-master when my tyrant was away, and such taste and talent as

I possessed were not brutally smothered. But he had his own sweet will. I was driven into the modern department, where my youthful essays were more appreciated.

But with persistent prejudice this vindictive master, who loathed the imaginative mind, and looked upon sentiment as a crime, wrote to my father and told him that he was handing to his paternal care one of the greatest fools that Marlborough had ever turned out.

Perhaps he was right.

The same kind of thing was done to a friend of mine, who was bullied in the sixth by the head-master. His father was told that his son had better hoe turnips, for he had brains for little else. Shortly after leaving Marlborough he obtained a very distinguished place in the open competition for the Indian Civil Service. Some natures want sympathy as flowers want sunshine.

The play chosen for Robertson's debut was "Society,"—not much of a play as plays went, even in those days, so far as mere story was concerned.

It was rather of the cheap fiction and penny serial order, and had probably appeared in one or other of the magazines or annuals for which Robertson was writing every week, for I have been able to trace the germ of most of his plays, in fiction, before they were utilised for the stage.

But it was the treatment of the "playlet," it could have been little more, that attracted Marie Wilton. It is inconceivable that any actress of talent and position would admire the character of Maude Hetherington, a part very little better than an ordinary *ingénue*, without a chance of exhibiting that charm and *espièglerie* for which the actress was already famous. It was not even a comedy character, merely a spoony walking lady.

Still, there was something about the play that interested the clever little manageress. It was fresh, it was original, slight no doubt; but there was character in it. Byron, nervously apprehensive, twisted his moustache, and expressed his doubts about the now famous club scene. He was disinclined of course to pour cold water on his old friend's work, for he was loyal to his "chum," as was the fashion in those days, and wanted him to win after all his disappointments.

I can hear Byron suggesting to "Marie" the danger of the scene. Most of the characters were taken from life. Robertson, who had a caustic tongue and a sarcastic style, must have made enemies at the Savage or the Reunion, or whatever the Bohemian society was that he satirised. The "boys" would not like it; the press would be down on Robertson, and so on.

Byron warned Marie Wilton that it was a very dangerous experiment. To all these objections, however, the determined manageress turned a deaf ear.

In fact she ridiculed the further objection that the play, submitted to old Buckstone at the Haymarket, had been unanimously rejected by "Bucky" and all the stock company to whom it had been read—no doubt, at Sothern's request.

Again I can hear the merry manageress laughing this protest out of court. Why, her theatre was founded to de-fossilise the stage, and to bring young blood to the front! Conceive the Braids and Rogerses and little Clarks and Chippendales of that day in this slender, light, thistledown charade! Of course it would have failed, and failed dismally, at the Haymarket. Luckily for Robertson, it was rejected. Luckily for the Bancrofts and for budding art, the play was left on Tom Robertson's hands.

A failure such as this would have shut out from the stage for ever "Ours," and "Caste," and "School," and "Play," and other works which may be sneered at to-day, but plays that have had an enormous influence on the English stage of our time; and after the public is weary of what may be called photographic "snapshots" at society in its worst and most selfish and, may I add, most vulgar modern phase, will eventually return to that idealism, and imagination, and tenderness, and human nature, without which art cannot exist and the stage is useless.

As Coleridge said of the divinely gifted Shakespeare: "He has no interesting adulteries, or innocent incests, no virtuous vice; he never renders that amiable which, reason and religion alike, teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue."

The dramatist, however humble, who does not take those words to heart, will never be a great or even a popular dramatist. Photographic pictures of a soiled society may endure for a night, but joyous art cometh in the morning!



## CHAPTER XV

### “THE SUCCESS OF TOM ROBERTSON”

SOME of the critics did not hesitate to tell Tom Robertson that he had no right to be personal at the expense of his brother journalists, or to chaff the denizens of Bohemia in the delightful days of the early sixties.

And yet not only the celebrated scene of the “Owls’ Roost,” with the “Lend me Five Shillings” episode ; but the story how Robertson’s “Society” was produced, acted, made a success, and became the stepping-stone to the fame of the luckless author, is one of the very prettiest tales I have ever heard, illustrating the charity, good fellowship, and generous feeling that has ever existed in the light literary brigade.

Perhaps the “clanship” was more pronounced, and the selfishness, that attaches itself to human nature, was less acute then, than it is to-day, when competition is so terrible, and Bohemian clubs are not exactly what they were in the days of Tom Stylus.

Still, Robertson would have been the first to own that the change in his’ life from cynical despair, to radiant happiness, was effected mainly by the loyalty of his friends and companions, who gathered together to applaud and encourage him at the Arundel, Reunion,

Savage, and other haunts of the dwellers in the "beautiful city of Prague."

I have traced "Society" so far back as its possession by kindly, generous-hearted Ned Sothern. The genuine success of "David Garrick," and Sothern's brilliant acting as the hero of the play, which became the talk of the town, started a very sincere friendship between actor and author. They mutually understood and appreciated one another.

Dressed as David Garrick, Sothern, in the prime of life, and the handsomest man on the English stage, looked magnificent. The women, at any rate, did not consider his love making "hard," for he was their idol; whilst the men were extravagant in their praises of sweet and gentle Ada Ingot, as personated by that little gem of an actress, Nelly Moore, who died all too soon, because "the gods loved her." Did not Harry Leigh sing of her:

"Then I asked in quite a tremble—it was useless to dissemble,  
Miss or Madame, do not trifle with my feelings any more.  
Tell me who, then, was the maiden, that appear'd so sorrow-laden  
In the room of David Garrick, with a bust above the door?  
(With a bust of Julius Cæsar up above the study door.)  
Quoth my neighbour—'Nelly Moore!'"

"I've her photograph from Lacy's; that delicious little face is  
Smiling on me as I'm sitting (in a draught from yonder door).  
And often in the night falls, when a precious little light falls  
From the wretched tallow candles on my gloomy second floor,  
(For I have not got the gaslight on my gloomy second floor,)  
Comes an echo—'Nelly Moore!'"

Apropos of Sothern's David Garrick, his friend and biographer, Edgar Pemberton, observes:

"Prior to its production in London 'David Garrick' was tentatively produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham, with Miss Edith Stuart

as Ada Ingot, Mr. G. K. Maskell as Squire Chevy, and Mr. Bellair as Simon Ingot. After the performance, Sothern, who was most keenly anxious about his new part, and never satisfied with his own acting, emphatically declared that the whole thing was a failure, and, as far as he was concerned, would never be heard of again. Luckily, his own judgment was overruled by that of his friends and advisers, and, as every playgoer knows, Garrick became one of the most successful of his impersonations.

“No doubt the wonderful drunken scene, clever in its conception, and perfect in its detail, was the great feature of the piece; but though some critics took exception to his acting in the love scenes with Ada Ingot, he gained in them a multitude of admirers. Generally willing to accept the verdict of the press, Sothern was always rather sore with regard to this alleged defect in his performance; and on one occasion, when, on his benefit night in a provincial town, he made one of those little before-the-curtain speeches for which he was famous, he said: ‘The local critics have unanimously declared that, unfortunately for my career as an actor, my voice is wholly unsuited to “love-making.” With some compunction, and with my hand appropriately placed on my heart, I should like to inform those gentlemen that, following in private life that most agreeable of pursuits, I find that *I get on as well as most people.*’

“When ‘David Garrick’ was first produced at the Haymarket, Sothern (still thinking that he had made a failure) generously declared that the piece was saved by the exquisite acting of Miss Nellie Moore in the character of Ada Ingot; but long after that charming young actress was dead, he continued to play

Garrick to crowded and enthusiastic audiences in London, in all the large provincial towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and in America.

"To-day the part is honourably identified with the name of Charles Wyndham, who has gone still further, and, with the most gratifying and extraordinary success, has played it in the German language at Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Moscow."

Strange, indeed, that "David Garrick" should have returned to the Fatherland in this roundabout fashion, for Robertson took the plot from a French play, "Sullivan," which in turn was founded on a German story!

After the success of "David Garrick," both in Liverpool and London, Robertson was not at all disposed to rest upon his laurels.

As is well known, he wrote "Society" for Sothern, and intended him to play Sidney Daryl, for, as I have before hinted, Sothern, the comedian and humourist, ever fancied himself most as a romantic lover. There have been many others, in his line, who have done so since.

Robertson actually conceived for "Society" such a fatally bad Haymarket cast as Chodd Senior for old Buckstone, Lord Ptarmigan for old Chippendale, Tom Stylus for old Howe, and so on. Some good genius saved him from that calamity. No, indeed; "Society" was never intended for the fossils of the old school, but for the bright young fellows of the new.

Sothern liked the part of Sidney Daryl, and did not agree with Buckstone and his advisers, who said that the play was "rubbish." As an earnest of his good faith, Sothern backed his opinion to the extent of £30, which was to be a "first call" on the play if the actor could ever find an opening for it.

Robertson's heart went down to zero when Sothern wrote to say that he had better find a market for his play, as there were no chances of its production for a very long time.

So the disheartened author took his "firstborn" in the way of original plays to Miss Herbert, to old Benjamin Webster, to Alfred Wigan, and all the actor and actress managers of the day. They one and all politely refused poor "Society."

The rebuff that seemed to hurt Robertson most was that of Sefton Parry, who, when he had heard the play read by the author, pronounced it "rot."

"What do you think I said?" asked Robertson.

"Can't imagine," winked his friend.

"I told him that until that moment I was in doubt whether the play was a good or a bad one; but now that he, Sefton Parry, had pronounced it to be a bad one, my long and assured conviction that he was a born idiot had convinced me that 'Society' was excellent!"

At this juncture a brother Bohemian came to the rescue. Byron, who had a great regard for Robertson, knew him to be a brilliant fellow, and pitied his despair, which was eating the poor fellow's heart out, recommended the play very strongly to Alexander Henderson, who was then managing the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool.

Was there ever such pathetic ill luck as waited on poor Robertson? He suddenly got a message from the faithful Byron to say that Henderson would be in town from Saturday to Monday, and would be glad to hear the play read at Byron's house on Sunday evening.

But where was the play?

Robertson clutched at his red beard and danced about the room like a maniac. The only manuscript had been

lent to his friends the Billingtons, who lived miles away at Highgate. There was no time to be lost, so Robertson took a cab, rushed into the room, and asked John Billington for his precious "scrip."

"Oh, I remember, Tom,—that play 'Society.' Mrs. Billington will know where it is."

Luckily for Tom Robertson he did not see the wife's frightened glance over his shoulder to her husband.

She had not the slightest idea where the manuscript was, or what she had done with it.

"Oh ! yes ! she would go upstairs and fetch it !"

Then followed an awful half hour. Robertson, the most excitable of men, fumed and fretted ; and "John" contrived to keep him amused with some of his Yorkshire stories, all of which he had heard before.

At last came a mysterious call from upstairs.

"John !"

"Yes, my dear."

Then a whisper over the bannisters.

"John, I cannot find the play anywhere. I have hunted high and low. I think I must have lost it."

"Lost it ! Nonsense ! I tell you you must find it. The man will go raving mad."

So back went John Billington to try and appease the infuriated dramatist.

Another awful half hour. The Yorkshire stories were almost exhausted. The situation was becoming dangerous. At last Mrs. Billington reappeared, beaming, with the manuscript in her hand. She had found the manuscript, saved the situation, and made the play.

"Society" was read to Henderson, who was delighted with it, and promised to produce it at Liverpool. But the career of ill luck was not over yet. Bohemia, in one of its brightest ornaments, had to come to the

rescue. It was not a case this time of "lend me five shillings," but lend me £30, which was a very different thing in Bohemia-Land.

Robertson was ever the most scrupulous and honourable of men. The play was accepted, a production had been promised; but Robertson declared it would be impossible that any further steps could be taken in the matter until he had repaid to Sothern the £30 for which "Society" had been pawned.

Could Byron lend him the money?

Byron, with a rueful countenance, pulled his moustache, and frankly admitted he was terribly hard up at the time.

Back went Robertson in despair to the Arundel Club, where he found, as good luck would have it, William Belford, the actor. When he had related his misfortune to his old friend, cursing the demon of ill luck, who pursued him so relentlessly, his brave heart was comforted with these cheering words from a true "pal":

"Tom, my boy, cheer up! I'll get the money for you. I don't know where, or from whom, for the life of me. But, trust me, I'll get it. I've heard about the play, and how in the 'Owls' Roost' you have hit us all off to the life, you satirical dog! The critics will be down on you; but never mind, you'll win yet."

Robertson received the £30 next day. Sothern was repaid. "Society" was free; and dear old Belford got his money back out of Robertson's first receipts for his successful play.

Good deeds like these seldom go unrewarded. The time came, in the course of years, when ill health, and being unable to act, diminished the savings of poor "Billy Belford." So his friends arranged a benefit for the popular actor and good fellow at the Lyceum.

Ellen Terry recited, and it was a brilliant success. Young Charles Dickens and I were appointed hon. secretaries and trustees for the Benefit Fund. When Belford died, we had a little bit over to hand to his faithful sister, who had nursed him with such devoted affection.

On the 8th of May, 1865, "Society" was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, with the following cast :

<i>Lord Ptarmigan</i>	Mr. Blakeley.
<i>John Clouderays, M.P.</i>	Mr. F. Cameron.
<i>Sidney Daryl (a barrister)</i>	Mr. Edward Price.
<i>Mr. John Chodd, Sen.</i>	Mr. G. P. Grainger.
<i>Mr. John Chodd, Jun.</i>	Mr. L. Brough.
<i>Tom Stylus</i>	Mr. E. Saker.
<i>O'Sullivan</i>	Mr. C. Swan.
<i>Mac Usquebaugh</i>	Mr. Chater.
<i>Doctor Makricz</i>	Mr. Smith.
<i>Bradley</i>	Mr. W. Grainger.
<i>Scargil</i>	Mr. Waller.
<i>Sam Stunner (alias the Smiffel Lamb)</i>	Mr. Hill.
<i>Moses Aaron (a bailiff)</i>	Mr. Davidge.
<i>Sheridan Trodnnon</i>	Mr. Bracewill.
<i>Lady Ptarmigan</i>	Miss Larkin.
<i>Maud Hetherington</i>	Miss T. Furtado.
<i>Little Maud</i>	Miss F. Smithers.
<i>Mrs. Churton</i>	Miss Procter.

Thus it was Alexander Henderson, at the suggestion of H. J. Byron, who really started Robertson on his successful career. The author's appreciation of our Bohemia was shown by his dedication of "Society"

"TO MY DEAR FRIEND, TOM HOOD."

Byron, though he was unable to lend the fatal £30, never relaxed in his desire to help Robertson. He it was who suggested to Marie Wilton to take into consideration for the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, the play so successfully produced at Liverpool, although he was



still afraid of the "Owls' Roost" scene, and its effect on the critics, who were extremely sensitive on any question of *esprit de corps*.

In one of the earliest criticisms on "Society," I find these words :

"In the second act the principal scene is a clubroom at a tavern, to which newspaper writers are supposed to resort in their late and leisure hours. Under the name of 'The Owls' a social literary club is sketched in rather strong colours, and the peculiarities of what is now called 'Bohemianism' are mercilessly dragged before the public gaze. There is little doubt of this scene having been drawn from life; but it may be doubted if the general public will believe in the fidelity of the sketch, or that the class so satirised will concur in the propriety of its exhibition."

Notwithstanding Byron's nervous apprehension, Marie Wilton voted heartily for "Society," much to Byron's surprise.

"At last," says Marie Wilton, "he (Byron) agreed that it was worth the trial. This was my first acquaintance with Mr. Robertson; and I cannot describe the charm with which he read his comedy, which further developed the beauties of 'Society,' as his new play was called. I remember how he impressed me as being of a highly nervous temperament; he had a great habit of biting his moustache and caressing his beard—indeed, his hands were rarely still; he was at that time thirty-six, somewhat above medium height; rather stoutly built; he had a pale skin and reddish beard, with small piercing red brown eyes, which were ever restless."

On the 11th of November, 1865, "Society" was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre (under the

management of Marie Wilton) with the following cast :

<i>Lord Ptarmigan</i> . . . . .	Mr. Hare.
<i>Lord Cloudbwags, M.P.</i> . . . . .	Mr. Trafford.
<i>Sidney Daryl</i> . . . . .	Mr. Sydney Bancroft.
<i>Mr. John Chodd, Sen.</i> . . . . .	Mr. Ray.
<i>Mr. John Chodd, Jun.</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. Clarke.
<i>Tom Stylus</i> . . . . .	Mr. F. Dewar.
<i>O'Sullivan</i> . . . . .	Mr. W. H. Montgomery.
<i>Mac Usquebaugh</i> . . . . .	Mr. Hill.
<i>Doctor Makvicz</i> . . . . .	Mr. Bennett.
<i>Bradley</i> . . . . .	Mr. Parker.
<i>Scargil</i> . . . . .	Mr. Lawson.
<i>Sam Stunner, P.R. (alias the Smiffel Lamb)</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. S. Teesdale.
<i>Shamheart</i> . . . . .	Mr. G. Odell.
<i>Doddles</i> . . . . .	Mr. Burnett.
<i>Moses Aaron (a bailiff)</i> . . . . .	Mr. G. Atkins.
<i>Sheridan Trodnon</i> . . . . .	Mr. Macart.
<i>Lady Ptarmigan</i> . . . . .	Miss Larkin.
<i>Maud Hetherington</i> . . . . .	Miss Marie Wilton.
<i>Little Maud</i> . . . . .	Miss George.
<i>Mrs. Churton</i> . . . . .	Miss Merton.
<i>Servant</i> . . . . .	Miss Thompson.

After a very pleasant companionship in the stock company of the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, Squire Bancroft, or Sydney Bancroft as he was then called, and John Hare found themselves once more "stable companions" in that other little Prince of Wales Theatre directed by Marie Wilton in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, London.

Strange to say, it was Ned Sothern again, who was able to give John Hare a leg up, in the same way that he had incidentally and accidentally helped Tom Robertson. Hare, before he went on the stage, was a pupil of Leigh Murray, for whom the youngster had the very highest regard. Had it not been for his persistent ill health, Leigh Murray would have been one of our most celebrated, as he was one of our most charming and refined, actors. His performances in "The Discarded

Son," the first version of "*Le Fils de Famille*," subsequently known as "*The Lancers*," and "*The Queen's Shilling*," and in the "*Camp at Chobham*," and "*My First Champagne*," will not readily be forgotten.

Ease, grace, good looks, and refinement of manner were Leigh Murray's characteristics ; and although he was a far better actor than Alfred Wigan, he never made the same name. Under Leigh Murray's tuition, Hare worked away at various small characters. He had a bad attack of stage fright when he first appeared in "*A Woman of Business*," a capital little play, in which Mrs. Stirling was so admirable at the Adelphi, and wanted to "throw up the sponge"; but good-natured Johnny Toole, who had been pleased at Hare's performance of the poet Lexicon in John Hollingshead's "*Birthplace of Podgers*," advised him to stick to the profession.

He played Pinch, a schoolmaster, in "*The Comedy of Errors*," when revived in Liverpool for the Brothers Webb as the Dromios; but Sothern first picked out this admirable artist from the back rank.

Hare's performance of the stuttering Jones in "*David Garrick*" delighted Sothern, and he promised the young actor a good part in the new forthcoming drama by the erratic Watts Phillips, which was advertised for months by the mysterious words, "Watch this frame," printed in monster letters on a kind of looking-glass.

We did watch this frame until we became almost distracted, when suddenly other giant letters appeared which informed us that the new Watts Phillips drama was to be called "*The Woman in Mauve*." The part of Beetles, a policeman, was given to Hare during the trial trip in Liverpool; and Sothern refused to take him out of it, although he was implored to do so. Sothern was right, and his advisers quite wrong.

Naturally the young actor longed to get up to London. Nobody, however, was inclined to jump at him; and even Marie Wilton, who had praised him at Liverpool, held aloof. So John Clarke advised the youngster to "write in," as it is called, to the new management in London.

He did so, and declared he was ready to do anything he was told, play any part that was offered him, and be grateful for any salary he could get. Behold the tyro, then, with a salary of £2 a week and the part of the Landlord Short in "Naval Engagements."

"How wise," drawled Byron, "to appear first of all in a part so exactly suited to you! Short figure, short man, short part! The critics will say, 'Mr. Hare, a clever young actor, made his first bow to a London audience, and was most excellent—in short perfect!'"

"Yes, but if I fail," observed John Hare.

"Then," said Byron, "we'll rechristen the piece 'Short Engagements'!"

All Tom Robertson's friends were rejoiced when it was definitely announced that his play "Society" was to be produced at the little Theatre in the Tottenham Court Road. For we knew how talented and brilliant he was, and how bad fortune had dogged his heels through life. Cynic as he pretended to be, he was in reality the most tender-hearted and sentimental of men.

He was deeply attached to his wife, an actress, who had bravely borne the burden of his sorrows, though in dreadful health; and his son, now dead, has faithfully recorded how his children adored their father.

He had a mania for children, and could never pass them in the street looking into a sweet stuff or bun shop, without taking them inside, and spending all his spare coppers on the delighted little ones.

I remember one night at Tom Hood's rooms when we all assembled to read out our contributions to one of our usual Christmas annuals in a friendly way to one another.

Burnand must have been there, and Halliday and W. S. Gilbert, and W. B. Rands and Jeff Prowse, and Tom Archer. Robertson's contribution was as usual a theatrical story, or at any rate a story of theatrical life. I think it was called, "What the Baby's Hand Unlocked," and I know that in it occurred the now historical phrase of a child of theatrical parents being "nursed on rose pink and cradled in properties."

The tale affected us all very deeply. It went straight to the heart, as Robertson's work ever did; and to this story we, his comrades, awarded the prize for talent, shaking him warmly by the hand for the pleasure he had given us.

It is a different world in which we live to-day. I do not think we meet, or discuss our work together, or cheer our comrades on so much as we did then. We certainly did not covet our neighbour's goods or "anything that was his" in the way of talent.

So, naturally, we all assembled on the first night of "Society" to give a cheer to our "pal,"—the man who I was gravely informed the other day by one of his relatives that I had never seen or spoken to. But what will not people say?

Tom Hood and I stood at the back of the dress circle, for the house was so crowded that there were no seats for us. I was a kind of journalistic free lance in those days, writing in any paper which would give me a hearing, and pay me a pound, "devilling" for my friends, and contributing regularly to the *Era*, for which, in addition to theatrical matter, I followed Shirley

Brooks with a chatty article on general subjects, called "Our Omnibus Box."

The new play was simple enough in plot and characterisation; but the novelty of it, with all its unconventionality, and its originality of treatment, were very refreshing. But it was not the unconventionality that is advocated to-day. Robertson came at a time when artifice was conquering art, and the weapon with which he defeated artifice was nature.

The haters of conventionality to-day would discard the beauty of nature, and substitute for it a shriek of despair.

We thought very well of young Bancroft, handsome, well-dressed, enthusiastic, boyish and natural; and contrasted him favourably with the seedy-looking "jeunes premiers" of his time.

We all loved Marie Wilton, and had done so for some years; and, as I have explained, she seemed somehow to have been self-elected into our set. Miss Larkin was admirable as Lady Ptarmigan, and so was John Clarke as the snob, young John Chodd. Fred Dewar as Tom Stylus seemed exactly the right man in the right place; and as the character developed we whispered to one another, "Horace Green of the Arundel Club." Dr. Strauss and many more of our boon companions we recognised in the Club scene.

But the one performance that made the most impression on us that memorable night was the Lord Ptarmigan of John Hare. Few of us had ever heard of him. To the audience he was a perfect stranger. But when the sleepy old gentleman, dressed to perfection, like one's grandfather or great grandfather, came quietly on the stage dragging a chair behind him, there was a thrill of astonishment, as well there might be, on

the part of those who knew how "old men" were played before John Hare came to "reform them altogether."

It was a small and insignificant character, but the little actor had made the hit of the evening. When we were told that he was "a mere boy" we laughed; when we were introduced to him afterwards and found that off the stage he was a boy indeed, we could scarcely believe our eyes.

From that moment John Hare advanced step by step. He never once went back. Success followed success until he was pronounced, as he is to-day, the most polished, observant, and artistic actor of his time. Meissonier himself and the great Dutch artists never painted portraits on canvas so exquisitely finished in every detail, or so perfectly coloured, as John Hare's studies of character, senile and otherwise, on the English stage. He leaves nothing to chance in his masterpieces. And it is a wide field from Sam Gerridge to Benjamin Goldsmith and from old Eccles to the gay and dissolute Lord Quex.

The day after "Society" was produced every one in dramatic London was talking of the new young actor, John Hare.

Up to this time we had not heard much dialogue like this on the modern English stage, I mean dialogue that contained such humorous banter, such cheerful cynicism.

### ACT III.

Scene 1st—"The Owls' Roost." (Same as Scene 1st, Act II.)

Daylight—the room in order.

Tom discovered writing at table R., boy sitting on table L., and holding the placards, on which is printed "Read the *Morning Earthquake*—a first-class daily paper," &c. On the other, "the *Evening Earthquake*—a first-class daily paper—latest intelligence," &c.

Tom: Um! It'll look well on the walls, and at the railway stations. Take

these back to the office (boy jumps down) to Mr. Piker, and tell him he must wait for the last leader—till it's written.

(Exit boy, c. Tom walks to and fro smoking long clay pipe.)

The *M. E.*—that is, the *Morning Earthquake*—shakes the world for the first time to-morrow morning, and everything seems to have gone wrong with it. It is a crude, unmanageable, ill-disciplined, ill-regulated earthquake. Heave the first—old Chodd behaves badly to me. After organising him a first-rate earthquake, engaging him a brilliant staff, and stunning reporters, he doesn't even offer me the post of sub-editor—ungrateful old humbug! Heave the second—no sooner is he engaged than our editor is laid up with the gout—and then old Chodd asks me to be a literary warming pan, and keep his place hot, till colchicum and cold water have done their work. I'll be even with old Chodd, though! I'll teach him what it is to insult a man who has started eighteen daily and weekly papers—all of them failures.

Heave the third—Sidney Daryl won't write the social leaders. (Sits L. at end of R. table.) Poor Sidney! (Takes out the magenta ribbon which he picked up at the ball.) I sha'n't dare to give him this—I picked it up at the ball, at which I was one of the distinguished and illustrious guests. Love is an awful swindler—always drawing upon Hope, who never honours his drafts—a sort of whining beggar, continually moved on by the maternal police; but 'tis a weakness to which the wisest of us are subject—a kind of manly measles which this flesh is heir to, particularly when the flesh is heir to nothing else—even I have felt the divine damnation—I mean emanation. But the lady united herself to another, which was a very good thing for me, and anything but a misfortune for her. Ah! happy days of youth! Oh! flowering fields of Runnington-cum-Wapshot—where the yellow corn waved, our young loves ripened, and the new gaol now stands! Oh! Sally, when I think of you and the past, I feel that—(looking into his pot) the pot's empty, and I could drink another pint (putting the ribbon in his pocket). Poor Sidney!—I'm afraid he's going to the bad.

This is the "five shillings" episode from the same play that caused so much amusement.

(Enter Waiter, C. He gives glass of brandy and water to Sidney, and glass of grog to Shamheart.)

O'Sull.: What news, Daryl?

Sidney: None, except that the Ministry is to be defeated. (O'Sullivan pays waiter.)

All: No!

Sidney: I say, yes. They're whipping up everybody to vote against



Thunder's motion. Thunder is sure of a majority, and out they go. Capital brandy. (Coming forward.) Tom ! (Tom rises—they come down stage.) I am off to a soirée.

Tom : (R.—aside.) So am I, but I won't tell him.

Sidney (L.) : I find I've nothing in my portmonnaie but notes. I want a trifle for a cab. Lend me five shillings.

Tom : I haven't got it ; but I can get it for you.

Sidney : There's a good fellow, do. (Returns to seat.)

Tom : (To Mac Usquebaugh, after looking round.) Mac (whispering), lend me five bob.

Mac U. : My dear boy, I haven't got so much.

Tom : Then don't lend it.

Mac U. : But I'll get it for you. (Crosses to Bradley—whispers.) Bradley, lend me five shillings.

Brad. : I haven't it about me ; but I'll get it for you. (Crosses to O'Sullivan—whispers.) O'Sullivan, lend me five shillings.

O'Sull. : I haven't got it ; but I'll get it for you. (Crossing to Scargil—whispers.) Scargil, lend me five shillings.

Scarg. : I haven't got it ; but I'll get it for you. (Crossing to Macvicz—whispers.) Doctor, lend me five shillings.

Dr. M. : I am waiting for chaange vor a zoveren ; I'll give it you when de waiter brings it me.

Scarg. : All right ! (To O'Sullivan.) All right !

O'Sull. : All right ! (To Bradley.) All right !

Brad. : All right ! (To Mac Usquebaugh.) All right !

Mac U. : All right ! (To Tom.) All right !

Tom : (To Sidney.) All right !

It was all so new, so fresh, so true of the Bohemia that we all knew.

Chodd, Jun. : No !

(As soon as the sitters see Tom Stylus they give him a friendly nod, look inquiringly at Chodd, and whisper each other.)

Tom : (R.) You'd better. They are men worth knowing. (Pointing them out.) That is the celebrated Olinthus O'Sullivan, Doctor of Civil Laws. (O'Sullivan is at this moment reaching to the gaslight to light his pipe.)

Chodd, Jun. (L.) : The gent with the long pipe ?

Tom : Yes ; one of the finest classical scholars in the world ; might have sat upon the woolsack if he'd chosen ; but he didn't. (O'Sullivan is now tossing with Mac Usquebaugh.) That is the famous Desmond Mac Usquebaugh, late M.P. for Killcrackskullcuddy, county Galway, a great patriot and orator ; might have been Chancellor of the Exchequer if he'd chosen ; but he didn't. (Scargil reaches to the

gaslight to light his pipe.) That's Bill Bradley (pointing to Bradley, who is reading paper with double eye-glass), author of the famous romance of *Time and Opportunity*; ran through ten editions. He got two thousand pounds for it, which was his ruin.

Chodd, Jun. : How was he ruined by getting two thousand pounds?

Tom : He's never done anything since. We call him "One book Bradley." That gentleman fast asleep—(looking towards author at table, L.)—has made the fortune of three publishers, and the buttoned-up one with the shirt front of beard is Heri Makvicz, the great United German. Dr. Scargil, there, discovered the mensuration of the motive power of the cerebral organs. (Scargil takes pinch of snuff from a box on table.)

Chodd, Jun. : What's that?

Tom : How many million miles per minute thought can travel. He might have made his fortune if he'd chosen.

Chodd, Jun. : But he didn't. Who is that mild-looking party, with the pink complexion and the white hair? (Looking towards Shamheart.)

Tom : Sam Shamheart, the professional philanthropist. He makes it his business and profit to love the whole human race. (Shamheart puffs a huge cloud of smoke from his pipe.) Smoke, sir; all smoke! A superficial observer would consider him only a pleasant oily humbug; but I, having known him two-and-twenty years, feel qualified to pronounce him one of the biggest villains untransported.

Chodd, Jun. : And that man asleep at the end of the table?

Tom : Trodnnon, the eminent tragedian. (Trodnnon raises himself from the table—yawns—stretches himself, and again drops dead on table.)

Chodd, Jun. : I never heard of him.

Tom : Nor anybody else. But he's a confirmed tippler; and here we consider drunkenness an infallible sign of genius—we make that a rule.

Chodd, Jun. : But if they are all such great men, why didn't they make money by their talents?

Tom. (R.) : Make money! They'd scorn it! They wouldn't do it—that's another rule. That gentleman there (looking towards a very seedy man with eyeglass in his eye) does the evening parties on the *Belgravian Banner*.

Chodd, Jun. (with interest) : Does he? Will he put my name in among the fashionables to-night?

Tom : Yes.

Chodd, Jun. : And that we may know who's there and everything about it?—you're going with me.

Tom : Yes, I'm going into *society*; thanks to you're getting me the invitation. I can dress up an account, not a mere list of names, but a picturesque report of the soirée, and show under what brilliant auspices you entered the beau-monde.

Chodd, Jun. : Beau-monde! What's that?

Tom (chaffing him) : Every man is called a cockney who is born within the sound of the beau-monde.

Chodd, Jun. (not seeing it) : Oh ! Order me 200 copies of the *Belgravian*——. What's its name ?

Tom : *Banner*.

Chodd, Jun. : The day my name's in it—and put me down as a regular subscriber. I like to encourage high-class literature. By the way, shall I ask the man what he'll take to drink ?

Tom : No, no.

Chodd, Jun. : I'll pay for it. I'll stand, you know. (Going to him, Tom stops him.)

Tom : No, no—he don't know you, and he'd be offended.

Chodd, Jun. : But, I suppose all these chaps are plaguy poor ?

Tom : Yes, they're poor ; but they are *gentlemen*.

Chodd, Jun. (grinning) : I like that notion—a *poor* gentleman!—it tickles me. (Going up R.)

Tom (crossing into L. corner) : Metallic snob !

Then came “Ours” on the 12th September, 1866. When the word was placarded on the London walls the people could not understand it. They thought it was a French play about a Bear, L'Ours ! It was nothing of the kind ; it was one of the most stirring and dramatic little plays that Robertson ever wrote.

He adored soldiers, and liked nothing better than to write about them ; for he had studied their natures, manners, customs and eccentricities in the various garrison towns in which he was quartered as an actor. All the officers loved Tom Robertson. He talked well, chaffed well, and told them home truths. They asked him, the poor actor, to mess, and treated him like one of themselves. In turn he coached them for their private theatricals, and tried to teach them how to act.

The best proof that Tom Robertson loved soldiers is contained in “Ours” and “Caste,” and nearly all his plays, not forgetting “For Love,” which he produced, without much success, at the Holborn Theatre, and tried to thrill us with the story of the “Wreck of the Birkenhead.” I never heard a play better described

than this one by Robertson. But the stage mechanism at the Holborn Theatre wrecked the poor Birkenhead, and Robertson's ideas vanished in smoke.

In "Ours" we found that all our young friends had vastly improved, and, like Robertson's soldiers, were marching to the front.

Hare's Prince Perovsky was another little masterpiece—a small part, but perfect in its way. It called forth the special commendation of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, an acute critic and accuracy itself on all questions of uniforms, decorations, and deportment. Then, and since then, objection has been taken to the hut scene in the Crimea, where the girls play at soldiers, and Mary Netley makes the "role-y-poley" pudding. "A role-y-poley pudding in the Crimea! It's a fairy tale." We were not so critical then; and how could we be when Marie Wilton was Mary Netley, the very sunshine of joyous comedy; and Lydia Foote—never distanced in the part—was Blanche Haye, the loving, sentimental girl?

Robertson, a born dramatist, knew the value, none better, of a scene described "off." And it was this scene that virtually made the success of "Ours." The departure of the troops to the Crimea,—seen "off," illustrated "off" with bands, tramping of soldiers, words of command, but described "on" by Marie Wilton, who worked up the thrilling situation to a pitch of wild excitement and enthusiasm. The play may be revived again and again, but I for one shall ever hear Marie Bancroft's voice in this brief, sharp, effective passage:

(When she opens window the moonlight, trees, gas, &c., are seen at back. Distant bugle.)

Mary: There's Sir Alick on horseback. (Music ceases. Distant cheers. On balcony.) Do you hear the shouts?

Chalcot : Yes.

Mary : And the bands ?

Chal. (on balcony) : Yes, there they go, and the chargers prancing.

Mary : And the bayonets gleaming.

Chal. : And the troops forming.

Mary : And the colours flying. Oh, if I were not a woman, I'd be a soldier.

Chal. : So would I.

Mary : Why are you not ?

Chal. : What ? a woman ?

Mary : No, a soldier. Better be anything than nothing. (Cheer. Bugle.) Better be a soldier than anything. (Tramp of troops marching heard in the distance.)

There is nothing so effective as a scene described "off," particularly when your author can depend on a Marie Bancroft or a Sarah Bernhardt. Who can ever forget the divine Sarah's description of the battle at the window in Henri Bornier's "*Fille de Roland*," or the scene at the window in Sardou's "*Fédora*" ? In America very foolishly they thought to improve on Robertson's suggestion, and introduced real bands, real regiments, real officers in command, filing across the stage after the fashion at Old Astley's. Of course it was a dead failure, as it deserved to be.

Among the gems of "*Ours*" is the opening scene between Sergeant Jones and the gamekeeper. Observe how simple it all is. Its very strength is its simplicity. Young dramatists, please note this !

Sergeant : Good morning !

Houghton : Good morning !

(Sergeant shakes Keeper's hand warmly ; Keeper surprised.)

Serg. (warmly) : How are you ?

Hough. : Quite well. How are you ?

Serg. : I'm—I'm as well as can be expected.

Hough. : What d'ye mean ? (With dialect.)

Serg. (with importance) : I mean that last night my missus—— (whispers to Houghton.)

Hough. (surprised) : Nay !

Serg. : Fact !

Hough. : Two? (Sergeant nods.) Twins? (Sergeant nods.) Well, mate, it does you credit—(shakes hands condolingly)—and I hope you'll get over it.

Serg. : Eh?

Hough. : I mean, I hope your missus 'll get over it. Come and ha' some beer.

Serg. : I must go to the Hall first. I wish they'd been born at Malta.

Hough. : Where?

Serg. : At Malta.

Hough. : Malta! That's where they make the best beer.

Serg. : No, it's foreign. When a child's born in barracks there, it gets half a pound o' meat additional rations a day.

Hough. : Child does?

Serg. : Its parents. \*Twins would ha' been a pound a day—pound of meat, you know. It's worth while being a father at Malta.

Hough. (looking at Sergeant admiringly, and shouldering his gun) : Come and ha' some beer to drink this here joyful double-barrelled ewent.

Excellent, also, and quite in the best Robertsonian vein, is the duologue between Angus Macalister and Hugh Chalcot about marriage. I may here remark that Squire Bancroft made a far better Angus than the original, John Clarke.

Chalcot : Better stop here and smoke. I feel in a confidential humour. (Angus sits again.) So you're in love with Blanche?

Angus : Yes.

Chal. : I saw that long ago. You know that I proposed to her?

Angus : Yes.

Chal. But I'm proud to say she wouldn't have me. Ah! she's a sensible girl, and her spirited conduct on that occasion in saying "No!" laid me under an obligation to her for life.

Angus : She declined?

Chal. : She declined very much. I only did it to please Sir Alick, who thought the two properties would go well together. Never mind the two humans. Marriage means to sit opposite at table, and be civil to each other before company. Blanche Haye and Hugh Chalcot! Pooh! the service would have run—"I, brew-houses, malt-kilns, public-houses, and premises, take thee, landed property, grass and arable, farmhouses, tenements, and salmon fisheries, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold for dinners and evening parties, for carriage and horseback, for balls and presentations, to bore and to tolerate till mutual aversion do us part." But land, grass, and arable, farmhouses, tenements, and salmon fisheries said, "No!" and brew-houses is free.

Angus : At all events you could offer her a fortune.

Chal. : And you're too proud to make her an offer, because you are poor.

(Angus sighs.) You're wrong. I have more cause of complaint than you. I am a great match—a *bon parti*. My father was senior partner in the brewery. When he died he left me heaps. His brother, my uncle, died, left me more. My cousin went mad—bank notes on the brain—his share fell to me, and, to crown my embarrassments, a grand aunt, who lived in retirement in Cornwall on four hundred a year, with a faithful poodle and a treacherous companion, died too, and left me the accumulated metallic refuse of misspent years. Mammās languished at me for their daughters, and daughters languished at me, as mamma told them. At last my time came ; I fell in love—fell down, down, down, into an abyss where there was neither sense, nor patience, nor reason—nothing but love and hope. My heart flared with happiness, as if it were lighted up with oxygen. She was eighteen. Blue eyes—hair yellow as wheat, with a ripple on it like the corn when it bends to the breeze—fair as milk. *She looked like china with a soul in it.* Pa made much of me, ma made much of me ; so did her brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts, and cousins, and cousinettes and cousiniculings. How I hated 'em ! One day I heard her speaking of me to a sister. She said—her voice said—that voice that, as I listened to it, ran up and down my arms and gave me palpitations—she said, “I don't care much about him ; but then he's so very rich.” That cured me of marriage, and mutual affection, and the rest of the poetical lies. You've youth, health, strength, and not a shilling—everything to hope for. Women can love you for yourself. Money doesn't poison your existence. You're not a prize pig tethered in a golden sty. What is left for me ? Purchasable charms, every wish gratified in the bud, every aspiration anticipated ; and the sight of the drays belonging to the firm, rolling about London with my name on them, and a fat and happy drayman sitting on the shafts, whom I envy with all my heart. Pity the poor ! Pity the rich ! for they are bankrupts in friendship, and beggars in love.

Angus : So, because one woman was selfish, you fall in love with poverty, and the humiliations, and insults—insults you cannot resent—heaped on you daily by inferiors. Prudent mothers point you out as dangerous, and daughters regard you as an epidemic. You are a waiter upon fortune, a man on the look-out for a wife with money, a creature whose highest aim and noblest ambition is to sell himself and his name for good rations and luxurious quarters, a footman out of livery known as the husband of Miss So and So, the heiress. You talk like a spoilt child. The rich man is to be envied. He can load her whom he loves with proofs of his affection. He can face her father and ask him for her hand. He can roll her in his carriage to a palace, and say, “This is your home and I am your servant.”

Chal. : You talk like a man in love. Couldn't you face Sir Alick ?

Angus : No !

Tom Robertson's friends on every possible occasion implored him to dramatise Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." He had at his hand an absolutely ideal Becky Sharp in Marie Bancroft. He was fond of reading to us that splendid bit of prose descriptive of Amelia's prayer for George when he lay dead after the Battle of Waterloo :

"No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. The darkness came down on the field and city ; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart."

Robertson tried again and again, but at last gave up the task in despair. The novel was too rich in dramatic incident, too good ; there were too many plums in that pudding. Others had tried before to concentrate the "novel without a hero" into one fine stirring play. But they had failed.

Robertson acknowledged that the subject beat him. He could have taken the Marquis of Steyne episodes and welded them into a play, with the Marquis, Rawdon, and Becky for the principal characters, as Ohnet did afterwards in "*Froment Jeune et Risler aîné*;" but Robertson wanted George and Amelia and Dobbin and Jos and, most of all, Becky Sharp.

So he did the next best thing : he gave us "Caste," where we have shadows at least of George and Amelia in George d'Alroy and Esther, a very respectable echo of Dobbin in Captain Hawtree, and, throughout, the tender tone and cynicism of Thackeray, which were very dear to Robertson. There is not a trace of Dickens in any of his plays. His master was Thackeray.

The root idea of Robertson's third successful play, and in my opinion by far his best work, will be found



in a contribution to a little volume of short stories in 1866, called "Rates and Taxes and how they were collected." It was the successor to a similar volume of a year before, entitled "The Bunch of Keys."

The contributors in both years were Tom Hood, Tom Robertson, W. J. Prowse, Thomas Archer, Clement Scott, and W. S. Gilbert. Tom Hood, our editor, gracefully described our friendship to the public, and said:

"The writer of these lines, looking back to the introduction of the 'Bunch of Keys,' finds it there said that this Christmas volume is the growth of friendly communion, of pleasant chats of an evening, of fellowship, of taste, and feeling. Discord and a darker shade—that may have been nearer to some of us—have passed by the little circle of friends who thus once again submit the result of their united labours to the public."

Alas! would that the same words could be written to-day!

In Robertson's story Ensign Daubray, the soldier hero, married Polly Eccles before he went to the Crimea. The milk-jug episode with the return of the dead man does not occur, and Captain Swynton (Hawtree) married his friend's widow and became the guardian of her child. Old Eccles was here sketched almost to the life; it will be seen that "Jenny" in the novel became Polly Eccles in the play; and it may be interesting to quote a few passages that show how the play follows the story in the book.

Ensign Daubray was twenty-three years of age; stood six feet two in his stockings, and in his saddle weighed over seventeen stone. He was of one of the first families in England. His father was dead, and his mother, who had been a great beauty, and was in her age

hook-nosed, majestic, and terrible, had married a second time, and she ruled Lord Clardonax as tightly as she had ruled Fairfax Daubray. She was a haughty, irascible old woman, who knew no law but her own will, and whose pride of birth and family was French, and pre-revolutionary French. Ensign Fairfax Daubray was a fine young fellow, high-hearted and broad-chested, single-minded, and straightforward, and not particularly bright. He had a vacant expression of face, which fact, joined to the possession of a tongue either too broad or too thick for his mouth, made him seem stupid. He was fond of field sports, had been reared to regard his lady mother with a superstitious sort of awe, and was a very quiet, well-disciplined young man.

Captain Swynton was Daubray's senior by about six years. There was a suspicion of trade in the family of the gallant captain, which he endeavoured to stifle by professing a contempt for commerce that would have been exaggerated in a duke. He was a sort of mild *roué* and amiable worldling, with a considerable capacity for misconduct, and a fair share of good nature and kind-heartedness. He was never known to do anything exactly noble, nor had he been discovered in the execution of anything particularly mean. He expressed openly and with perfect sincerity his regard for number one, and thought that all men should seize every opportunity for self-advancement. He was a good-tempered man about town, who would leave the society of a baronet for that of a lord, unless the baronet happened to be very rich and influential, would drop a viscount for a marquis, and the marquis for a duke. In whatever society he found himself, he invariably addressed his conversation to the most important person

present, and was considered among his set a very nice gentlemanlike fellow.

At Westminster Bridge Fairfax Daubray dismissed his cab, turned to the left, and walked till he came to Stangate. He paused before a house with a shrivelled shrub and some mangy grass between the lead-coloured wooden railings of the "front garden" and the door, and then, opening the gate gently, he tripped up some steps, and knocked a small double knock,—quite a diminutive knock for so large a young man. Having committed himself thus far, Ensign Daubray fell to a persevering contemplation of his boots, and the colour ebbed and flowed about his temples, and the short fair hair in their immediate neighbourhood, with the regularity of the pendulum of a clock.

It was a dreary morning, and Stangate is a dreary neighbourhood, and has an air of general neglect and decay, as though the hand of Chancery were strong upon it. There is but little stir in Stangate. It is not a crowded mart or thoroughfare. Purveyors of cheap fish and damp cocks and hens are its most ordinary frequenters. The very children seemed depressed, and turn to the river side for excitement and fresh Thames air. Ensign Daubray's mother, Lady Clardonax, would have stared, had she seen her son in such a place, with all the might of her dark eyes and purple pince-nez.

The door was opened by a young girl with black shining hair and a pale face.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she said; "I thought it was you."

And she laughed. Fairfax Daubray seemed to think it a good joke too, for he also laughed.

"May I come in?" he inquired.

"Of course you may; we are all at home."

The young man was ushered into a room where there were three more young ladies, all with dark shiny hair and large eyes; one was mending a pink silk stocking, another was covering a tiny canvas shoe, and the third was recumbent on a dusky sofa, deep in a well-worn and unpleasant looking romance. The fair young hostess snatched a basin containing vegetables from the table, and disappeared with them, saying as she returned,

"You mustn't see what we have got for dinner, or you'll be as wise as we are."

"How do you all do?" asked Daubray, as he dropped into a chair.

"We are all quite well, and so is Polly," said the first speaker.

Polly was the young lady mending the pink silk stocking; and her three sisters—for they were all sisters—looked at her as they spoke, and then looked at Ensign Daubray and smiled archly and went on with their occupations.

Daubray sat near Polly, but did not address her personally. Polly was the eldest, the darkest eyed, and the prettiest of the sisters—demure, quiet, and self-possessed.

"What are you going to have for dinner, Jenny?" the young man asked.

"Find out," was Miss Jenny's reply. Jenny was the plainest of the sisters, and had acquired a sort of family celebrity for housekeeping and repartee.

"I wish you'd ask me to dine with you," said the young soldier.

"Oh! no!" Jenny pursed her lips, and shook her head. "You're too grand for us; you'd be wanting two sorts of pudding and all sorts of things."

"No, I shouldn't," urged Daubray.

"Then you'd eat too much," said Jenny, at which the sisters laughed.

"No, I shouldn't. I'm moderation itself. I can eat anything," said Daubray, somewhat contradictorily.

Jenny shook her head again. "It's all very fine, Mr. Ferguson," she said, "but you don't dine here. What's the time?"

The sister covering the shoe, the sister reading the romance upon the sofa, Polly and Jenny, each produced from the bosoms of their jackets a gold watch.

"Half past one," they all said in concert.

Daubray looked at Polly, drew a long breath, and asked, "What time?"

"Half past one," answered Polly; and she smiled on him and then lowered her large eyelids; and Daubray hitched his chair nearer to her; and the other sisters looked everywhere but at him, and pursued their avocations with an absorbing interest.

"Now, Sabina," began Jenny, sharply, "are you going to lie about reading that filthy book all day? And you, Cecilia, are you ever going to finish that shoe of mine? Do do something, there's dears."

At this signal the sisters Sabina and Cecilia rose and left the room, and Jenny laughed, and said to Daubray and Polly, "Now, you two, you can go on just as you like, for we shall be in the kitchen till dinner-time, and that's half past two; then Polly must go out for a pink saucer." Jenny then hummed an operatic air, threw her arms gracefully from side to side, executed a pas from the *Grand Divertissement des Bayardères*, and left the room, laughing loudly.

This is the description of the Eccles family.

"The history of the Eccles family was by no means singular or romantic. Of the prenuptial antecedents of Mr. and Mrs. Eccles, nothing is known. Mr. Eccles was either over proud, or possessed of mental attributes too high for his station in life—for he would not work. As all men of active minds must find some occupation to interest and amuse them, Mr. Eccles took to drinking—a pursuit which he varied at tolerably regular intervals by beating his wife. The poor woman eked out a scanty livelihood by letting off a portion of the house in Stan-gate, and by her needle. She gladdened Mr. Eccles's home by four pledges of mutual affection—all of the female sex. While the fourth was still a nurseling, Mrs. Eccles did the very best possible thing she could do under the circumstances—she died, leaving Mr. Eccles a disconsolate widower with four children.

"The measure of Mr. Eccles's grief may be best judged by the copious means he took for banishing recollection. He wept tears whenever he alluded to his late wife, in the presence of a person of sympathetic mind and hospitable intentions. 'Polly,' sobbed and hiccupped Mr. Eccles, 'my eldest gal, is now my only consolation—she takes after her poor mother, which is a comfort to me.'

"And Polly, who was barely nine years of age, took after her mother, and nursed her baby sister, and washed and combed her other little sisters, and waited on her father, and was abused and beaten by him. It was a horrid thing, as Mr. Eccles often remarked, to have ungrateful children.

"Ensign Daubray was naturally very much shocked at the first sight of Mr. Eccles, and it required all his love to make him remember that so damaged a parent was his Polly's misfortune, and not her fault. Mr.

Eccles was a dirty-looking old villain, with the flavour of last night's tap-room strong upon him. His address was unpleasing, fawning, and sham-propitiatory. Daubray saw the blackguard under his too civil, over-deferential manner, and wondered why, for the sake of his own comfort, he, Eccles, did not wash himself oftener. The girls considered their father a good average sort of parent; a little tipsified,—but that they were used to; and certainly somewhat eccentric, which was proved by his frequent personal castigation of his daughters—Polly, as the oldest and most habituated, being his favourite for punishment; but a very clever man for all that, and who could have done wonders—had he liked."

Here is the dramatic portion, where we have the scene in the Crimea, instead of India during the Mutiny.

"Ensign Daubray's regiment was ordered to the Crimea. Lady Clardonax kissed her son's forehead, and pressed his hand as she told him that she was sure that he would do his duty.

"Dib," said Captain Swynton, as he met the ensign in Piccadilly, "you see you've lost your bet. Been to Lady Clardonax's?"

"Yes."

"Did you tell her?"

"About Polly?—no!"

"What do you mean to do?"

"Not to tell her at all," replied Daubray. "When I come back—if I come back—she'll be so glad she'll forgive me, and if I *don't* come back, why, it won't much matter."

"That's a very good notion," remarked Swynton.

"It wasn't mine. It was my wife's."

"How does she bear it?"

"What?—the—my going? Oh, splendidly, *before me*. I'm afraid when I'm out there—she rather, you know—I've been to the agents, and I think I'd rather leave a sum, and I haven't got much, to be sure. She's going back to live with her sisters."

"What?" said Swynton, "do you mean to allow that?"

"She'll be so awful lonely when I'm gone; and you know there's a baby coming," said the poor fellow apologetically. "It's a bad job, isn't it? and there's that little wife of Sergeant Dwyer's breaking her heart because he won't take her out with him. I don't think soldiers ought to marry. Orders do so cut up the women."

It was a terrible parting. Polly bore it as meekly as she could, but there are bounds to the endurance even of women; and Fairfax had to go upon his knees and implore her to keep calm for the sake of the little one not yet of this world. The bugles rang out and the drums rolled as Ensign Daubray took his place with his company; and as he marched past the Queen, his heart thumped, and he felt every inch a soldier. At the same moment his wife was lying insensible, with her three pale sisters hovering round her.

Fairfax Daubray was a brave, stupid, good-natured young man, and adored by the men under his command. A finer-hearted gentleman or a more incapable officer never buckled on a sword-belt. He fought gallantly at the Alma, and wrote after the battle. His wife, who was again in the little house at Stangate, read parts of his letter to her sisters, who cheered and wept, and hurrahed as she read. She took them all with her to church upon the following Sunday.



It was in a hot skirmish that Ensign Daubray found himself in command of his company. His captain had been shot, and the lieutenant borne wounded to the rear. He saw the enemy above him. He knew that it was a soldier's duty to fight, and he led on his men up the hill-side.

"Dib, Dib, come back!" shouted two or three old officers from the main body of the troops behind him. Daubray turned round to them.

"*'Come back' be damned!*" answered he, waving his sword above his head; "*you fellows come on!*"

The next moment he fell, pierced by three Russian bullets. The soldiers saw him fall, cheered, and rushed on. The Russians were in strong force, the odds, numerically, were six to one; but the English regiment cleared the hill-side.

Daubray was carried to the rear. The surgeon shook his head. The dying man raised his eyelids, looked at his friend Swynton with a look that said plainly, "Oh, if I could speak!" His comrade pressed his hand, and, bending over him, put his lips close to his ear.

"Dib," he said, "can you hear me? Do you understand me?"

Daubray nodded an assent.

"I know what you mean," continued Swynton. "I know what you would say—your wife!"

Daubray smiled.

"Rely on me, I'll look after her, take care of her, and—and—your child!"

The wounded man smiled again, pressed his friend's hand, sank back, and died, as the general of division galloped up, and said to a bleeding major—

"Beautiful! beautiful! Like men, by God!"

There was one sentence in the story that always affected Bancroft. It was this :

"Major Swynton returned to England with one of his coat sleeves empty."

Bancroft always wanted to reproduce this effect in the last act of "Caste," when Hawtree makes his pathetic call on his "comrade's widow." But he was overruled. Doubtless he would have liked also to have reproduced on the stage the story of his comrade's death, which I have ever considered a fine bit of descriptive and dramatic writing. It is true Robertson.

I do not wish obstinately to pose as a "laudator temporis acti" when I say that I shall never see "Caste" played again as I did on the night of the 6th of April, 1867. There can never be—for me—any George D'Alroy like Fred Younge, any Captain Hawtree like Sidney Bancroft, or any Samuel Gerridge like John Hare.\* As for Polly Eccles—Marie Wilton *was* Polly Eccles. There can never be another until we are all reduplicated.

You must never forget that in nearly all these cases Robertson drew from the life. His models were before his very eyes. Fred Younge—killed, poor fellow, in a railway accident—was his schoolfellow and intimate friend, a good-natured, spoony, gentle Dobbin, *with a lisp*—the typical, brave, simple-hearted plunger !

Fred Younge was the only D'Alroy I have ever seen who dared to play the part with a lisp. It gave the exact manner of the man. And the scene with the baby, as played by Fred Younge, was the most touchingly natural, and pathetic thing, I have ever seen on the modern stage. Picture it ! A great, hulking, handsome, well-bred officer, who becomes a "great big

baby " again, lisping inarticulate sentences over the infant that he could have crushed to death in his great, strong, manly arms. The modern generation will doubtless say, "What rot!" But I said then, and repeat now, "How true!"

Who that saw Fred Younge can ever forget the effect he made as D'Alroy, when, prompted by Polly, who asks him to guess his son's names, lisps out, with the baby in his arms :

"George? (Polly nods.) Eustace? (Polly nods.) Fairfax? Algernon? (Polly nods.) *My names!* How old are you? I'll buy you a pony to-morrow, my brave little boy! Take him away, Polly, for fear I should bend him!"

Leonard Boyne came next to Fred Younge in suggesting the tenderness of a strong man. The others, for the most part, thought the scene childish and feared the laugh. There never was a question of a laugh with Fred Younge. There were many tears instead, "I can assure you."

Again, with Marie Wilton and John Hare as Polly and Sam, they are and ever have been incomparable.

Who else could say as Marie Bancroft did, "He's come back! He's come back! He's come back! Alive! Alive! Alive! *Sam, kiss me!*" No one but a genius could give that, quick as lightning, change from mock heroics to truth. She was acting for half the sentence. But with the words, "Sam, kiss me," she was the genuine woman with a heart of gold.

Who else could describe with such exquisite humour and pathos the ballet of "Jeanne la Folle, or the Return of the Soldier"? She had done it for us years before "Caste" was born or thought of. Who else but John Hare as Gerridge, the gas-fitter, could

read the inimitable circular to the "Nobility and Gentry of the Borough Road," or say, in answer to Polly's—

"Why, Sam, what's the matter?"

"The water's got into my meter!"

As to old Eccles, both David James and John Hare, years after, ran George Honey very close indeed as Eccles; but the Captain Hawtree of Sidney Bancroft has remained an undisturbed memory.

There was one Esther Eccles that I think I preferred to Lydia Foote, sweet and interesting as she was. And that was poor Amy Roselle, who died so tragically in Australia at the hand of her poor mad husband Arthur Dacre.

Esther Eccles is one of the most sympathetic parts ever written for a woman; but the actresses of to-day do not appear to understand, or appreciate it, any more than the actors do the character of George D'Alroy. Sentiment is to them hateful, because the age is artificial and supposed to be unsentimental.

I am certain of this, that Thackeray or Dickens would have been proud to have written these sentences descriptive of the feelings of a loving wife on the eve of parting from her husband when she is about to become a mother.

"Esther: (Rising and twining her arms round him.) George, if you must go out to your club, go. Don't mind leaving me. (Taking his hand.) Somehow or other, George, these last few days everything seems to have changed with me. I don't know why, sometimes my eyes fill with tears for no reason, and sometimes I feel so happy for no reason. I don't mind being left by myself as I used to do. When you are a few minutes behind time I don't run to the window and watch for you, and turn irritable. Not that I love you less, no!"

find love you more; but often when you are away I don't feel that I am by myself. *I never feel alone.* (Goes to piano and turns over music.)

George: What angels women are! At least this one is; I forget all about the others. (Carriage wheels heard off.) If I'd known I could have been so happy, I'd have sold out when I married."

Those words, "I never feel alone" are a crystallised poem.

And in after years a dramatist endeavoured to obtain the same effect by making the husband drink off a glass of milk to the health of the unborn child! What bathos! Nay, worse!

It is interesting to note that in August, 1867, this was the American cast at the Broadway Theatre, New York:

<i>Hon. George D'Alroy</i> . . . . .	W. J. Florence.
<i>Captain Havstree</i> . . . . .	Owen Marlowe.
<i>Samuel Gerridge</i> . . . . .	E. Lamb.
<i>Old Eccles</i> . . . . .	W. Davidge.
<i>Marquise de St. Mauv</i> . . . . .	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert.
<i>Polly Eccles</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Florence.
<i>Esther Eccles</i> . . . . .	Mrs. S. F. Chapfrau.

Soon after the production of "Caste" when Robertson's success was firmly established and prosperity smiled on him, he married, for the second time, a charming and accomplished German lady, a resident in Frankfort, and a relative of his old friends the Levys, at whose house he first met her.

This acquired German influence was at once apparent. It coloured his pretty work "Play," the scene of which was laid at Baden Baden, a delightful comedy, and one that will ever be remembered by me on account of the charming scene in the ruins of the Alte Schloss, which suggested a love duet for Harry Montague and Marie Wilton.



NELLY FARPEN.



*Photo by* [Adolphe Beau.  
MR. CHARLES MATHEWS.



*Photos by* H. NEVILLE.  
(“Ticket of Leave Man.”)



[Adolphe Beau.  
MR. AND MRS. MATHEWS.



Montague was then one of the handsomest young fellows on the stage. His real name was Mann, and he was discovered by Boucicault, who made him take a junior brief at the Westminster Theatre (old Astley's) in the "Trial of Effie Deans." Then this delightful personality was taken up by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews, who became—as we all were—very much attached to him. He acted light parts with them at the St. James's, such as Christopher Larkins in "Woodcock's Little Game."

He was one of the famous triumvirate of managers—Montague, David James, and Thomas Thorne—that started the success of the little Vaudeville.

From there he drifted to the Globe, where he was sole manager, and then suddenly he disappeared to America, where he died young, having established there a reputation and popularity as great as he had received at home. Poor fellow! he had no enemy but himself. Men liked him as much as women did, and if not a great actor, he was gifted with a peculiar persuasive charm and a taking manner that few men possess. When Harry Montague entered a room, so charming was his manner that he gave one the impression that for months or weeks past he had been dying to see the men and women with whom he so gracefully and earnestly shook hands. His Jack Wyatt in Albery's "Two Roses" was an ideal performance.

With "School," perhaps Robertson's most successful play—I have always preferred "Caste," but the public plumped for "School"—the author, for the first time in his series of successes, departed from the line of strict originality. The outline of the plot of "School" will be found in the "Aschenbrödel" (Cinderella) of Roderick Benedix. In Germany the fact of a resident usher in a girls' school would not be anomalous, and it is not



difficult to understand what fairy tale suggested the parody of the pumpkin and glass slipper in the last act.

In "School" every member of the company seemed to be fitted like a glove. Naomi or "Nummy" Tighe, the warm-hearted, mischief-loving, generous schoolgirl, is not only declared to be by Marie Bancroft her favourite character, but it is certainly one of the most perfect of her many creations.

A sweeter and gentler Bella than Carlotta Addison we are not likely to see; whilst Harry Montague as the manly Lord Beaufoy, Bancroft as the loquacious common-sense Jack Poyntz, and John Hare as old Beau Farintosh, have seldom done anything better in the whole Robertsonian series. As Krux the usher, F. Glover was good; but I think Gilbert Hare, one of the few actors of a younger school who seems to understand Robertson, was even better. Old Addison—father of Fanny and Carlotta—as Dr. Sutcliffe, and Mrs. Buckingham White as Mrs. Sutcliffe, have never been distanced.

The milk-jug scene in "School" has been frequently discussed. The Robertsonians think it tender and pretty enough; the ante-Robertsonians vote it to be bathos. Who shall decide?

It was daring no doubt, but it seemed to be delightfully natural as played by Harry Montague and Carlotta Addison.

It gave rise to the taunt of the "teacup and saucer, or milk and water, or bread and butter, school" of comedy; but all Robertson's plays have weathered those little storms of prejudice.

The last of Robertson's series was "M.P."

Early in 1871 this gifted creature died. The end of poor Tom has been pathetically described by the Bancrofts.

"On the night of the Friday following, when the play was over, Dion Boucicault was waiting privately at the theatre to gently break the news to us that, quietly and suddenly, the end had come that evening.

"Never were the oft-quoted words, 'What shadows we are ! what shadows we pursue !' more fully realised.

"After an early manhood, passed in struggling misery, and sometimes almost want, Robertson was snatched from life when he had only just begun to taste its sweets. His footprints, as it were, upon the shore of fame were quickly placed, but he trod deep enough for even the sands of Time not readily to efface them.

"Shortly after this, his two children (by his first marriage) spent the day with us ; and as we were walking round the garden, 'Tommy,' who was but a small boy then, seemed to love to dwell upon the sad subject of his father's death, and the little fellow was very pathetic in his boyish remarks. All at once he said, 'A few days before father died, I knew he was going to leave us.' 'How could you know it ?' we asked. 'Because he looked so handsome. I have heard that people get such a beautiful look upon their faces when they are going to die.' It seemed as if the son had inherited his father's poetic mind.

"Only a few weeks before, Robertson had been deeply shocked to hear of the death of Frederick Younge, his schoolmate, best friend and the original George D'Alroy in 'Caste.' He was killed in a railway accident."

Thus passed away the one author of my time who has had the greatest influence for good on the English stage. He kept it sweet, and fresh, and green, and sunny. He always touched the major chords of love, and faith, and hope ; never the jarring discord of hopelessness and misery and despair.

## CHAPTER XVI

### “ANOTHER STEP UP THE LADDER”

IN the year 1868, about the middle of the reign of the Bancrofts at the little theatre in the Tottenham Court Road, with the new school in full swing; and the fresh movement fairly established, I was anxious to get into regular harness again.

I was tired of being a free lance, weary of “devilling” for my friends, sick of taking up odd jobs when they came in my way, and of guerilla warfare generally,—I desired to join the ranks once more.

“Back to the army again, Sergeant,  
Back to the army again.  
Don’t look so ’ard, for I ’aven’t no card,  
I’m back to the army again.”

If the “movement” was a true one and genuine one, I desired to be in it. I had already learned by experience that a trade theatrical paper was useless for me. I must at this epoch, if I could be of any service to the stage at all, be a free trader, or nothing. There must be no more “protection” if we were to advance and not ignominiously retire again.

For regular work on a daily newspaper I was not yet experienced or ripe enough. I earned my little guinea every Christmas for doing a pantomime, on Boxing

Night, for the *Daily Telegraph*, and I was proud to earn it ; but in 1868 I was struggling for the stripes of a non-commissioned officer having risen from the ranks.

Once more a bit of luck aided me in my ambitious enterprise. A very old, and dear, friend of mine told me that a share in the *Weekly Dispatch* had been bought by a solicitor in the City with whom he was intimately acquainted, and that he would introduce me, if I cared for it, to Mr. John Baker, the solicitor in question.

He lived in one of the handsome citizens' houses on the west side of Russell Square, the kind of house in which old Sedley dwelt, and Amelia and all our mutual friends of "Vanity Fair," and so on a certain Sunday we arranged to call on the newspaper proprietor.

The visit and the introduction were a success. I found that my new friend was a charming man and an intelligent one into the bargain. We chatted on, throughout the afternoon, with his wife and clever children, one of whom is now on the stage, and the end was that I was asked to dinner in an informal way. It often happened in those days that where one called, one dined, on the Sunday, which was ever devoted to the home circle.

My ambition was of course to be appointed dramatic critic of the *Weekly Dispatch*. It was ever a popular and independent paper, and I knew that I should get what support I wanted from the editor, George Emerson ; the brilliant Radical, W. C. Bennett, the poet watch-maker of Greenwich, and author of "Baby May," who assisted Emerson ; and of course from the proprietors, Stiff and John Baker.

Nervously apprehensive, but full of ambition, I sat down to dinner in the handsome dining-room of the old Russell Square house. I was the only guest outside

the family, and "over the walnuts and the wine"—I remember that it was very choice port wine by the way,—the matter was settled. I told friend Baker what I had done, and what I wanted to do ; and when I went home that night I was as good as engaged as the dramatic critic of the *Weekly Dispatch*. The appointment was duly confirmed the next day, and I fear it earned me many enemies, for the new critic was considered an interloper for daring to mingle journalism with daily work at the desk of a Government office.

Once on this subject I had better continue it to the end ;—on the subject, I mean, of journalistic stepping stones.

The earliest of the stormy days of my career—and heaven knows I have had enough, and too much of them, always, however, in the direct interest of the art I endeavoured to serve to the best of my ability—began with the *Weekly Dispatch*.

The tone of independence in criticism, which the public desires, and the theatrical manager as well as the artist hates ; the criticism that the reader of the newspaper, who has seen the play, considers absolutely fair ; but that the person criticised very often, and perhaps naturally so, considers unfair and unjust ; is the kind of criticism that brings the grey hairs of the critic in sorrow to the grave.

I had no grey hairs then, but I know I went into the battle, with my life in my hand, fighting for a good cause, and fighting, I think, to secure the victory, over which the professors of the stage rejoice to-day ; and naturally pluming their feathers, forget sometimes the difficulties, the dangers and the arduousness of the campaign, and the loyal soldiers who helped to win it. At a recent Women's Congress Mrs. Kendal "thanked

God reverently that her profession had achieved the position it now possessed." I for one echo that fervent prayer ; for I know what the stage was yesterday, and what it is to-day.

It is easy to sentimentalise over a battle-field, which was once strewn with corpses, and now grows corn and crops again.

I, and those generous fellows who assisted me, had many doughty champions to tackle. The little Prince of Wales Theatre, with the Bancrofts and Tom Robertson to guard it, was our rallying point ; but we had to face Chatterton and Falconer at the Adelphi ; George Vining at the Olympic or Princess's ; Benjamin Webster at the Adelphi, in reality a champion of universal art, but who had been dragged into the skirmish on the wrong side and was bound to defend the old school of managers.

No amount of work frightened me in those days. I was at my desk at the War Office all day ; I was sub-editing and writing for the *Morning Summary*, one of dear and erratic George Maddick's many unsuccessful ventures ; I was at the theatre whenever there was a new play, and I was contributing my several columns to the *Weekly Dispatch*. I cannot tell you how many failures in the way of newspapers I helped to start for cheery, good-natured, visionary George Maddick, of Shoe Lane, Fleet Street. He was one of the many hundred newspaper speculators I have met who, according to their own phrase, "might have had the *Daily Telegraph*" !

But they didn't. And some one else did. That was exactly the difference in the situation.

Talking of difference of situation reminds me of a little anecdote told of a well known author whilst he was rehearsing one of his plays. The "leading gentle-

man" who thought he knew everything and there was nothing left for him to learn, was being continually hauled up after speaking his lines. This troubled him exceedingly, and he repeatedly advanced towards the footlights with these sort of remarks addressed to the author:—

"Mr. —, I am a very excitable man, and so are you."

Pause—more lines spoken by leading gentleman,—more faults found by particular author:—

"Mr. —," said the actor, making once again for the footlights, "I am a very irritable man, and so are you!"

At last the author became in his turn a bit worried, and stopped the leading man in his peregrinations down the stage with these words:—

"Mr.—, I know exactly what you are about to observe, but if you want to know the difference between us—I am a very clever man. Next act, please!"

George Maddick, who had a decent little journalistic property, a scientific trade journal, was always scheming to become a millionaire. That supposed loss of the *Daily Telegraph* was a positive nightmare to him, as it has been to many others in the same situation. All day he was making up "dummy" papers in his office,—sporting papers, theatrical papers, social papers, women's papers, papers of every imaginable size and importance, and dreaming of the time when he would become famous.

He had an affectionate nature, and was a kind and true friend, but he did not make the fortune that he expected out of the *Morning Summary*, which was edited by Ernest FitzRoy, a clergyman who also edited a once celebrated journal, the *John Bull*, for which I wrote political, social, and ecclesiastical leading articles,

laying down the law, on every conceivable subject, at the age of twenty-five !

Because I had not enough to do in the way of fighting a common enemy in the *Weekly Dispatch*, and other papers, who should cross my path but James Mortimer, who had come over from Paris with a subsidy from the Emperor of the French in his pocket to start a new London daily paper, called the *London Figaro*.

Independence in every department, outspoken remarks on every conceivable subject, were the watchwords of James Mortimer. So, unasked, he sent for me to undertake the dramatic department, to write a column of gossip signed "Almaviva," and to do the current dramatic criticism. It was putting my head into a "hornets' nest," as it subsequently turned out ; but I did not flinch, though the pain I suffered from time to time was indescribable. It would have been so much more easy to pursue a "laissez faire, laissez passer" policy ; and then I might have departed, when all was done, in the "odour of sanctity." But I didn't desert the old ship for which I had signed my articles for good or ill.

James Mortimer was one of the most upright, candid, manly, and unselfish editors under whom I ever served. He gave me "carte blanche" at the outset, and he never once went back from his word.

If any Actors' Association or trades union of the kind at that time, one of whose objects being to stifle independent criticism and boycott candid critics, had asked for the dismissal or humiliation of any one of James Mortimer's staff he would have said, I am convinced of it, "Gentlemen, kindly oblige me with attending to your business, and permit me to conduct mine in my own way."



“I don’t select or dismiss your theatrical staff, and I don’t intend that you shall select or dismiss mine. You represent your class ! I represent mine ! I am a journalist, and support the cause of journalists. But at a given point our paths diverge, if you please.” And he would have added, “When the work of any one of my staff is passed, by me for the press, I undertake the responsibility. Now, gentlemen, fire away, but make me the target, if you please !”

Had he been asked to punish, to degrade, and, at a pinch, ruin a contributor for something he had written or suggested in another journal outside his own, why he would “just have smiled,” as the Americans say, and directed the attention of the aggrieved actor to the descent of the office staircase. That is what James Mortimer would have done !

But that is how they managed such matters in the old days, before society and social influence had fingers in this dainty pie.

It must have been very early in the year 1870 that I received an extremely polite note from a gentleman, unknown to me at the time, who had just arrived from Paris.

He was staying at a hotel in one of the river streets off the Strand, and begged that if I happened to be passing I would call on him on a matter of importance. The letter was signed “James Mortimer,” and, tiger for work as I was in those early days, I sniffed more prey, for there was some allusion in the note to that dearest of all ambitions to a young journalist—starting a new paper. Dear me ! how many papers have I not helped to start—papers political, papers theatrical, papers social ; in connection with my old friends Sir Douglas Straight, a born journalist, a popular barrister, and an excellent

judge ; Hamilton Hume ; Ernest Warren ; the gentle, patient, unobtrusive Ashby Sterry—a friend of forty years ; and genial, good-natured Arthur A'Beckett.

"Happening to be passing, indeed !" As a matter of fact, I passed Craven Street, Strand, every day of my life on my way from the War Office, Pall Mall, in the afternoon, to dine at the dear old Arundel Club in Salisbury Street, Strand, where I was certain to meet a goodly table full of splendid fellows, journalists, artists and a sprinkling of actors, who were accustomed to dine together before going to the play, on business or pleasure.

The idea never struck me that I might be accepting too much work ; for, in addition to weekly work on the *Dispatch*, I was London correspondent to several provincial papers, one of the verse makers on *Fun*, and scarcely seven days passed that I did not contribute a short story or an essay, or a something, to one of Beeton's or Cassell's periodicals, or a hymn or a religious ode to the *Quiver*.

The interview with James Mortimer was to me satisfactory in the highest degree. His intention was to start a light morning paper on the Parisian style, with more paragraphs in it than solid stuff. In fact it was the very first of the paragraphic journals so popular to-day : the first to knock at the stronghold of that British institution, the Leading Article. The *Figaro* of Paris was well known ; the *London Figaro* was *in nubibus*. Mortimer had heard, I know not where, of my independence and a certain pugnacity or fighting power which I had inherited from a very gifted father.

That was just the youth to suit James Mortimer, who was independent and a fighter to the backbone, as he proved in many a battle that he bravely fought on my behalf. He had heard also that this boy journalist had

already treated the drama in a new fashion. Hitherto, so-called dramatic criticism had been for the most part mere newspaper reports cut into lengths. I wanted, and so did Mortimer, to make them attractive; to compel the people to read them; to make them light, lively, and in accordance with the oncoming newspaper spirit, of the age. I succeeded so far that I was at once called the "inspired idiot." But to this much despised and occasionally, I hope, inspired idiot, my editors and proprietors of those days stuck to a man. Without their aid, I must have failed. Had they flung me down, I should have gone. But they put their sheltering shields over me. One of the very first and most loyal of these champions was James Mortimer.

So he gave me, in June, 1870, under my absolute control, without dictation from any human being, the dramatic department of the new daily paper, the *London Figaro*; and I was allowed to say what I liked, to be just and to fear not, to cringe to nobody, to care nothing about advertisements, their insertion or withdrawal, which did not come into my department at all, and to go forth, like a young David with a stone and a sling, to slay any Goliath in my path.

Nay, more, I was to sign my articles—a heresy in those days—and to call myself "Almaviva." In those early days of the *Figaro* I had the honour to be associated with a delightful little band of brothers, all of whom, living or dead, made a mark in their time. Up a little court—Windsor Court it was then called, as now—close by St. Mary-le-Strand, opposite Somerset House, and nearly next door to a Bohemian rendezvous of ours, the Edinburgh Castle, we used to meet every day—James Mortimer, our enthusiastic editor; John Plummer, our patient, good-natured, and industrious sub-

editor, a remarkable instance of a self-taught and self-made man, a character in his way, both lame and deaf, one of the most sensible "working men agitators" I have ever met, who is now alive, well, and respected in the city of his adoption, Sydney, Australia.

I remember that the valuable *Cosmopolis* for 1898 contained a very interesting letter from John Stuart Mill, the philosopher, dated Blackheath Park, Kent, March 8th, 1867, referring to John Plummer. The letter is addressed to M. Gustave d'Eichtal, the eminent French publicist, and from it I extracted the following :

"Mr. Plummer is a remarkable man. He was for a long time a humble working man in a small provincial town. He began to write, fired with indignation at certain procedures of the Trades Unions. From that moment he was always for advance. He is now a writer and a journalist ; and his writings on all questions that are particularly interesting to the working classes are remarkable for their good sense, their enlightening philanthropy, and even for their purity of style."

Our head printer was another characteristic specimen of a downright honest, independent working man, one Kenward, a handsome old fellow, with a long, snowy beard, who reminded me of Moses in the illustrated bibles.

Our grave political writer was a brilliant journalist, John Baker Hopkins, who jerked off his political ideas into quaint, but readable short sentences.

In the light brigade with me were my very old friend Ernest Bendall, then a clerk in the Paymaster-General's Office, and always a scholarly and charming writer, with the true critical faculty ; a fellow clerk of his in the same Whitehall office, one Aglen Dowty, who called himself "O. P. Q. Philander Smiff," and whose romances

of a young Londoner of the decent middle classes formed one of the most charming series of natural articles I have ever read.

Our musical critic was the world-renowned "Cherubino," Mr. Percy Betts, who, I think, outlived us all on the *Figaro*, and has become elsewhere in daily journalism a very shining light. Other distinguished names of colleagues in the early days of the *Figaro* come back to my memory. First and foremost was the Rev. Edward Bradley, the author of the once celebrated brochure, "The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green," which gives a delightful and amusing picture of undergraduate life in the University of Oxford in the early fifties, a book that I devoured when a public schoolboy at Marlborough, and of which I am proud to say I possess an original edition.

We had also with us George Emerson, who was for many years editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, a loyal friend of mine, who sent all the managers to the right-about when they had the effrontery to ask for my dismissal, under the threat of the withdrawal of advertisements—the usual bit of bombast, "your money or your life," à la highwayman of old.

With us also was that amiable creature and poet, Dr. W. C. Bennett, the brother of the late Sir John Bennett, the wonderful watchmaker of Cheapside, who wrote "Baby May," and other delightful poems of the home affections; Milliken, afterwards of *Punch*, the author of "'Arry," was also on the *Figaro* staff; and it is interesting to note that my immediate successor as "Almaviva" was Ernest Bendall, now of the *Observer*, who was in turn followed by Frank Marshall, and finally by that learned and accomplished critic and student, William Archer.

Day after day we turned out "copy" by the yard in

a fresh manner and new style ; in fact, so fresh was it, so new, so candid, and so independent, that it created elsewhere the bitterest of animosities and jealousies.

The stage was in a transition state, the old order was changing, giving place to the new ; and those who habitually lived in glass houses did not like stone throwing at all.

I had thrown in my lot with the new Bancroft school ; with the supporters of the new Henry Irving, who was forcing his way to the front by means of his enormous talent and originality ; with the Hares, and Jack Claytons, and Harry Montagues, and Alberys, and Wyndhams.

We were comrades, and we were every one of us working unselfishly in the interests of an art we all loved. When the story of the stage of the century is told it will be found that the impetus given to dramatic art at this period, by free, frank, and independent criticism, was considerable, and of inestimable value.

The sturdy and defiant independence of the *London Figaro* piled enemies on our proprietor's head, like Pelion upon Ossa. He saved all his contributors nevertheless, and stood up like an honest man to be shot at, for he knew he was working in a brave and honourable cause. First, F. B. Chatterton, of Drury Lane Theatre, tried to tackle him—the same Chatterton who swore, as scores of self-satisfied, swollen-headed managers have done since, that he would keep me out of every theatre he managed, but never succeeded in stopping my enjoyment for one single evening.

When Chatterton was tired of saying my name had been removed from the free-lists, and that he begged the proprietor or editor would appoint another critic who would be less independent and truthful, up came

George Vining to try and make the *London Figaro* and "Almaviva" eat the dust into which he tumbled ignominiously himself. George Vining was a pretentious fellow, a very fair but not particularly good actor, but in the matter of criticism intolerant and violent. He thought, because he had alternately managed the Olympic and Princess's Theatre, that he was infallible; but the *London Figaro* did not think anything of the kind, and the proprietor of the *London Figaro* knew something of the best French acting.

George Vining, with his hard corncrake voice, would not do after Mélingue, Bressant, Lafontaine, and Delaunay; and we youngsters were beginning to know something about the French stage in those days. So George Vining, like Chatterton, had to bite the dust. "Procumbit humi bos." The mules, with their jangling bells, came to drag him out of the arena. In his left shoulder was the *coup de grâce*.

There was one incident in my career as "Almaviva" of the *Figaro* which always causes me to this day a feeling of shame, pain, and humiliation, because my master suffered, and suffered severely, from a line of action deliberately taken by me. There came a time when some of us considered that the hooting, howling, cat-calling, and insults generally on a first night were cruel and overdone.

We were all in favour of fair play, independence, the right of hissing, and that kind of thing; but it seemed that authors and plays were hissed for a lark and nothing else. So on that point I spoke my mind, took the pit and gallery severely to task, and earned for poor James Mortimer the most horrible persecution that has ever befallen a public man in my time.

His appearance in a theatre was the signal for a roar



GEORGE VINING.



*Photo by* HENRY COMPTON. [*Adolphe Beau*



*Photo by* F. ROUX. [*W. Keith,*



*Photo by* SAM EMERY. [*Adolphe Beau,*  
("Bel Demonio.")





of yells almost deafening. He was actually asked by managers who liked and respected him, to keep away from the theatres for fear of creating a disturbance. They ought to have hissed me—as they did pretty freely afterwards; but they hissed poor James Mortimer instead. In vain I appealed to him to allow me to take the quarrel on my own shoulder. He sternly refused. "No," he said, "you are my critic. I pass your work; and when I have passed it, I am responsible for it. When I have done that, it is my work, not yours; it has received my 'imprimatur,' and I intend to take the consequences. If it is libellous in law, commercially, I shall pay the damages; if it is criminally libel, I shall go to prison for it,"—as he did in after years for words he never wrote or approved. "If the words in my paper are to be punished by cat-calls I will be hissed." I do not believe there have ever been two more loyal and honourable editors than James Mortimer and Edmund Yates. They both went to Holloway sooner than give up the name of a contributor.

On one occasion George Vining was on the warpath, and I, or rather James Mortimer, was the victim this time. He had never forgiven or forgotten the humiliation of that public apology at the Princess's Theatre, and the press was the red rag to this dramatic bull. When I was writing the column signed "Almaviva" for the *London Figaro* I noticed an advertisement issued by Vining, in which he ridiculed the press for stating opinions he (Vining) had asked them to give. The mere fact of sending a stall to the editor of a newspaper really meant, "give me your opinion." That at any rate was, and is now, my contention. So I boldly suggested in print that George Vining and his theatre should be boycotted by every

newspaper, as this would be the best way to bring him on his knees again. A libel action was the immediate result; but though the case never came into court, my friend and editor, Mr. James Mortimer, had to "square" the case at a very considerable cost.

On another occasion I was as nearly as possible in the criminal dock of the Old Bailey for telling the truth. Those were the days when there were as many criminal as civil actions for libel. I was asked by my friend and editor, Mr. Edward Ledger, to accompany him to a so-called theatrical ball, held at the Cannon Street Hotel. It was got up by an entrepreneur called Hodson Stanley; and my editor had a very strong idea that the dance in question had nothing whatsoever to do with the stage, nay, that the announcement was untrue, and derogatory to the profession.

When we arrived, we found that his surmise had been a correct one. So I wrote a very strong article, and signed it "Cannon Ball," which it was in point of force and detonating powder. My editor and proprietor was immediately served with a criminal action for libel, and he had to take his place in the Central Criminal Court for words written by me, which of course he had passed and approved. The case was going very badly against my poor friend, when Serjeant Ballantine whispered me to his side. He said, "The only way to save Ledger is to put you in the box, and say that you wrote the article. Are you prepared to do it? Only I must warn you that if you do that you will in all probability be in your friend's place next Sessions."

Without a moment's hesitation I went into the box and gave my evidence, owning up boldly, which evidently made the jury furious. They thirsted for my blood, and coolly suggested to the judge that the editor

and his critic should change places—I in the dock or very near it, he in the witness box.

But the judge intimated that the case as it stood on the record must be tried out. So they found the editor not guilty, and glowered at me as they filed out of the box. There, happily, for me the case ended, and my editor deservedly received a very handsome testimonial for vindicating the rights of the profession. In cases of this description before a jury the plaintiff's is, as a rule the safer side, and will be until the law of libel is altered, so as to put expediency on the same level as sympathy, where art criticism is concerned.

Some day perhaps this will happen, and I am bound to say Sir Edward Russell, the distinguished editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, has sounded the trumpet with great effect. It is not impossible that another blast or so will cause the walls of the jury's Jericho to fall down, placing art of every kind and class on a higher pinnacle. This "Cannon Ball" case is amusingly cited in the delightful volumes of "Recollections," by my old friend, Montagu Williams, Q.C.

By another lucky turn of fortune's wheel I arrived unexpectedly at the doors of the *Observer* office in the Strand. It happened thus. One Saturday night some very important play had been produced in London at which I had been present. Immediately after the performance I went down to the *Weekly Dispatch* as usual to write my criticism for the Sunday edition. It must have been a long notice, for, as I say, it was a very celebrated first night.

When I had finished at the *Dispatch* office I went on to the Arundel Club to get a bit of supper, smoke a pipe and enjoy a chat with some of the jolliest and cheeriest fellows in the world. I had just got to the "pipe and

glass" stage when I saw my old friend Edward Dicey, the then editor of the *Observer*, making his way to me through the fumes of tobacco smoke.

"I am so glad I found you," he said. "I am in a bit of a difficulty, and I think you can help me out of it if you will. Come outside, and I will explain."

We left the room, and then Dicey told me—it was now nearly two o'clock in the morning—that his dramatic critic had not turned up as usual at the office, and that Dicey had not one line about the important new play for the morrow's issue of the *Observer*.

"Would I come down to the office, late as it was, and write just a few lines, saying how it was received, with a little bit about the play and the acting?"

Dicey generously added that he could not ask me to do more, for he knew I must be tired, and was resting after my own work.

Never lose a chance, never neglect an opportunity, has always been my advice to young journalists.

Here was my chance, here was my opportunity! We jumped into a cab together, and before I began thinking over that dreadful first sentence I said to Edward Dicey,

"When do you go to press?"

"Oh! we go to press late, half-past three; but I tell you I only want a little bit, and you can be back at the club in half an hour."

The first sentence was all right when we arrived at the old *Bell's Life* and *Observer* office, next door to the Strand Theatre. Dicey showed me into a comfortable, quiet room, and I took off my coat, meaning to do or die this time.

Long before the paper went to press I had done a complete criticism, about a column and a half, and Dicey was delighted.

The next morning he sent for me, and asked me if I would accept the post of dramatic critic to the *Observer*—one of the plums of the profession.

My answer did not take long, as you may guess. One more step up that dangerous ladder, but I think my head was pretty steady!

I had a delightful time on the *Observer*, serving under one of the very kindest and most considerate of editors, who cheered me on, encouraged me and made my life an extremely happy one. In addition to the dramatic work, I first tried my hand, with Dicey's encouragement, on special and holiday articles, sentimental papers like "The Fall of the Leaf," and descriptions of seaside places and the country scenes that I loved. It was whilst I was on the *Observer* that I was able to call loud attention to, and to beat the drum for, any show that was really good; for any theatre, wherever situated; and for any actor or actress, however unrecognised or unimportant at the time.

It may sound strange to hear that, contrary to all precedent, swells in those days hailed a cab to go all the way to the Philharmonic Theatre near Islington Green to see a comic opera; they had never done so before, but they reversed their policy when "Geneviève de Brabant" was produced at the "Phil" by Charles Morton, and they were told, with the ringing note of enthusiasm, that it was an excellent entertainment worth patronising.

This is how Emily Soldene has described that memorable night; and it is interesting to note the description as an illustration of the fact that the first night excitement often does wonders for an imperfect play.

"Next morning—it was on a Saturday, a memorable

Saturday, the Saturday we all expected the Prince of Wales would die—at ten o'clock there came a messenger in hot haste, with a letter from Mr. Morton. A terrible thing had happened! Farnie had gone—fled—disappeared—packed his carpet-bag for parts unknown, leaving the disconsolate 'Geneviève' to her deserved and disgraceful fate! What was to be done? 'Would I come to the theatre at once?' I went, taking my unimpaired headache with me, and found everything in a fearful confusion. During the rehearsals, Mr. Farnie had conducted everything *vivâ voce*—scenes, lights, gas, and limelight. He was gone, and there were no 'plots,' the men could not work. From half-past ten a.m. till half-past six p.m. the people rehearsed, and I went through the opera with them, and made out all the plots for scenes, lights, and everything.

"Fortunately, everybody was too much on the alert to need 'calls,' and that trouble was spared. But all the music cues had to be written in, and at seven p.m. I was sitting on the floor—no, on the green baize stage cloth—cross-legged like a Turk, cross-tempered like a Turk, tired to death, voiceless, hopeless, but going to 'try,' if I died for it, rehearsing in a whisper the 'Sleep Song.'

"The success of that night was a record-breaker. The enthusiasm, the applause, the crowded house! The piece went with a snap and 'vim.' Everybody recollected every word and made every point. The gaiety of the audience was infectious. Every line, every topical allusion, was given with dash and received with shouts of laughter. How the Burgomaster blew his nose like a trumpet, 'toot-ti-ti-toot-ti-ti-toot,' and never got any further with his speech than 'In the year one.' How the gendarmes sang their 'We'll run 'em in' seventeen times. How everybody worked for the general good. (It is impossible to overpraise their loyalty.)

How Mr. Morton came on the stage and 'took it all back,' and congratulated and thanked and treated everybody. How a certain gentleman, named Clement Scott, sat in the front and was good to us, and wrote a good column notice, which, appearing next morning in the *Observer*, made a certain singer famous as Drogan, and grateful for ever.

"All these things live fresh and remembered in some hearts. The opera was well put on at the 'Phil,' everything was done very thoroughly, great attention being paid to realistic detail. Of course, as everybody has known for hundreds of years, the Duchess Geneviève's situation at a certain period in history, and also in the opera, was more interesting than correct or proper. And as an instance of the sort of carefulness that was exercised to provide a perfect ensemble, I may mention that five months after the production, Madame Selina Dolaro presented to an admiring world a girl baby, and it was called 'Geneviève.'"

When I was working away at the *Observer* I was one day sent for to Peterborough Court in Fleet Street in order to see Mr. J. M. Levy, the principal proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, the general supervisor of the paper, and who had the dramatic and musical departments under his sole control.

He was kind enough to compliment me on my *Observer* work, at which of course I was enormously flattered, for no man then living knew more of the stage or of journalism.

He asked me—it was in 1871—if I would like to join the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* as an assistant to E. L. Blanchard, the critic who had served the paper so well, so honourably, and with such distinction. He told



me moreover that I might continue to write for the *Observer* as well as the *Daily Telegraph*, which I did for some considerable time,—and hard work it was to write a Saturday night notice for the *Observer*, and another on the same subject and in a different style for the *Daily Telegraph* on Monday morning.

In 1873, I retired from the *Observer*, and suggested as my successor my friend Ernest Bendall, then of the Paymaster-General's Office, a comrade on the *London Figaro*, and he retains the post to this day.

He is at once one of the fairest, most judicial and temperate critics of my time ; seldom if ever at fault, and with an admirable and lucid reasoning power. And he brings to his task a pure and limpid style. As a writer of good English, Ernest Bendall has no rival, in my opinion, on the newspaper press.

I always thought he would have been selected as critic of *The Times* to succeed John Oxenford, a post that would have suited him admirably.

And there on the *Daily Telegraph* I remained until December, 1898, when I voluntarily retired from active work, although my friend and editor begged me to reconsider my decision in very handsome words, which gave me sincere pleasure.

I need scarcely say, that I should never have taken the step I did, had I been allowed to sign my dramatic articles, and so been personally responsible for what I wrote.

There are so many theatres in the London of to-day, west, east, north and south, London central and London suburban, that it is quite impossible for one man to do all the dramatic work. Dramatic critics in France and America are allowed to sign their articles ; and after so many years' service, and having been so

absolutely identified with the paper I represented, I claimed that privilege, not wishing to have the opinion of others fathered on me, or my opinions presented gratis to some one else. But signed dramatic criticisms were not the policy of the paper, so I had nothing to do but regretfully take my departure, and hear the doors of Peterborough Court close behind me.

This is Sir Edward Lawson's letter :

" 'DAILY TELEGRAPH,' FLEET STREET, E.C.,  
" December 5th, 1898.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT,—If I may be permitted to express an opinion, I think you are making a great mistake, and I advise you to reconsider your decision.

" You never were more able than now to discharge your duty as dramatic critic, and I think you take a very hazardous step in commencing a new career at your time of life. But if, my dear friend, you are fixed in your conclusion, I can only say I should accept your resignation with the greatest regret.

" Always sincerely yours,

" EDWARD LAWSON."

So, at any rate, we parted on the friendliest of terms, with sincere regret on both sides.

It must not be imagined, however, that an engagement on a great newspaper like the *Daily Telegraph* implies work only on one department of the journal.

My friends, from the outset, insisted that a very prominent place indeed should be given to the story of the stage day by day and week by week ; and since that liberal and excellent plan was adopted the value to English dramatic art has been incalculable. The *Daily Telegraph* was from the very commencement the pioneer of a most valuable movement ; and the

activity as well as enterprise of the directors compelled others to follow their example. "First night" notices were scarcely heard of before the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* entrusted me with that most important duty. Nowadays they are not the exception, but the rule. In certain quarters, particularly with authors, actors and actresses, these "first night" notices are strongly objected to, as hurried, incomplete, unfair, and so on.

We are told that they ought to be postponed until to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, or the day after that, or, if needs be, to the Greek Kalends. But a newspaper proprietor does not view the matter in that light. The fact of the production of a play is either news or not. If it is to be considered news of the first importance, it must be recognised as such.

Does it not seem a little inconsistent to crow over the fact that the drama is now considered in the social and journalistic world as one of the most important of the arts, and at the same time to deplore that the news about that drama is not postponed until the actors and actresses have learned their words and studied their business?

First night nervousness is a deplorable fact; but it attacks public speakers and singers, and often preachers as well as actors. It is one of the risks of the trade.

It must be remembered also that there are some journalists who have trained themselves to write after patient and mature reflection. Such an admirable writer is Mr. William Archer, and the dramatic art receives the full value of his careful and meditative method.

Others there are who have trained themselves to write on the impulse and spur of the moment, planning the article or description in their heads before it is committed

to paper. Such writers as these endeavour to the utmost of their ability to prepare the most readable article in the shortest possible space of time. I do not think that the dramatic art has on the whole suffered much at the hands of the "sprinters" on the press, as contrasted with the slow and steady long-distance runners. So, if a journalist has trained himself to "sprint," he is naturally employed, when occasion serves, on other departments of the paper.

In addition to criticisms on the theatrical events of the week day by day, and my weekly signed article "Drama of the Day," and reviews of books and leading articles on popular and social subjects, and anonymous letters to start a controversy in the autumn, or "Silly Season," as it is frequently called, and biographies of dramatic celebrities living or dead, and holiday articles in the United Kingdom, and literally all over the world, and dreadful journeys to the slums that made me very sick and ill, I have anonymously or otherwise described at full length every important pageant, procession, royal marriage, royal funeral, reception, cricket match, race meetings at Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood, Doncaster, and Newmarket; Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, Henley Regatta, and the innumerable exciting events of daily London life, from the glorious reception in London of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of their marriage, on the 10th. of March 1863, down to the last Diamond Jubilee, when, situated in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace, I was privileged to describe the start of perhaps the finest spectacular procession that the world has ever seen.

I have worked side by side with such splendid descriptive writers as Archibald Forbes for military manœuvres at Plymouth, and reviews at Aldershot have been

entrusted to my civilian care ; as Henry W. Lucy, with whom I have stood shoulder to shoulder awaiting some celebrity or corpse at Portsmouth Dockyard ; as William Senior, at pageants and processions and ceremonies all over England ; as faithful "Joe" Parkinson, now retired from the roar, riot and worry of journalistic life, who was my companion when H.R.H. the Prince of Wales visited Dublin in the Exhibition year,—a memorable campaign that included a riot in the Phoenix Park, and an installation of a Knight of St. Patrick, and ended in a delightful tour, "On a Car through Connemara,"—the first of my series of descriptive holiday articles by land and lake and "poppy land" and sea. With my old and loyal comrade, Beatty Kingston, I have described the funeral of President Carnot in Paris, and, at the outset, was a humble disciple in the art of "descriptive reporting," as it is called, of such masters as Nick Woods, George Augustus Sala, Edwin Arnold, and Charles Williams.

That word "reporting" tempts me to relieve my soul on a subject on which I may perhaps be allowed to express an opinion at the close of a long and varied journalistic career.

A descriptive writer must necessarily suffer many rebuffs from "jacks in office," and he requires to exercise in the interests of his paper all the tact and temper he has at his command. The word "reporter" is hurled at his head with an expression of undisguised contempt, as if to report a grand ceremony not only in the interests of the public, but of the very Court that desires publicity were an offence almost equal to high treason !

I will give an instance of the treatment to which descriptive writers on the press are subjected. On the great Diamond Jubilee Day, I was requested by my

editor to "start the procession" at Buckingham Palace, obtaining, if possible, permission to be within the gates.

I was favoured, most courteously, by a member of the Royal Household with a place on a stand erected at the extreme corner, from which I could see not only the various processions along the Mall, but along the splendid exit from the Palace, and the passing of the pageant right up Constitution Hill. It was impossible to have a finer place from which to describe an historical event.

Like an old campaigner, I was very early on the scene,—in fact, literally the first on the stand before eight o'clock in the morning.

I was soon joined by a friend, and in the early morning we naturally discussed the great event of the day.

Our conversation was rather rudely interrupted by an official with a badge or rosette in his button-hole, who had evidently overheard our innocent conversation.

He came up to me, with the manner I knew from experience so well,—the Court and military manner, which disdains any one out of uniform and innocent of a medal or a star. The following conversation ensued. The official opened the ball with the customary sneer.

"Pardon me. Are you a *Reporter*? (With a strong emphasis on the word.)

"A what?"

"Are you a *Reporter*?"

"I am here to describe the scene at Buckingham Palace."

"Then you are a *Reporter*."

"If you like."

"Then you must not stay here."

“Why?”

“This place is reserved *for ladies and gentlemen.*”

“When, pray, did I cease to be a gentleman?”

“I know nothing about that. That pen down there (pointing to a ruled-off corner, where nobody could see) is for the Reporters. You must go down there.”

“I shall do nothing of the kind. I have full permission to remain where I am.”

“Show me your card.” (Very rudely.)

“I have already shown the card, and I am in my proper place. But I have no objection to show it again, as you are so extremely civil.”

Whereupon I produced the special invitation from Lord ——, of the Royal Household.

“Why did you not tell me that you were a ‘gentleman’ before?”

There was no apology, no expression of regret, no *amende honorable* whatever. But this is a fair sample of the manner in which newspaper writers are treated who endeavour to do their duty to their paper and the public. Middle class life has by no means the monopoly of snobs.

Like the policeman, the reporter’s life when it crosses the official world, is certainly not “a happy one.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### “ THE REIGN OF THE BANCROFTS ”

I HAVE endeavoured, with all gentleness, to remind the student of the stage, that the revolution in the matter of stage costume, beauty of scenery, accuracy of detail, and the general minutiae of stage production on which the modern generation naturally prides itself, dates farther back than is generally allowed.

It is presumed, with no basis of accuracy, that the stage before the Bancroft and Henry Irving era was absolute chaos, and that the producer of plays was absolutely indifferent to the skill of the architect, the art of the scene-painter, the taste of the costumier, and the glory of colour, as well as of pictorial effect. But it is not so. Planché, who was an archæologist as well as a dramatist and poet, who held the office of Somerset Herald at the Heralds' Office, and who was employed by the Government to arrange the invaluable armour at the Tower of London, has told us what John Kemble did for the stage of his time. Macready was no laggard in the matter, and did his utmost to remove a long standing reproach. Charles Mathews, with the invaluable aid of Madame Vestris, as I have repeatedly pointed out, did an enormous amount of good to what was then the modern or society play.

They abolished the silly old custom of bringing a



couple of chairs down to the footlights in order that the characters might indulge in a dialogue. If the scene was set in a drawing-room, they gave us a drawing-room, and furnished it as a dwelling-room would be furnished. Walter Lacy has told us what care was taken to dress the characters in "Money," and that he himself employed Count D'Orsay's tailor. Charles Mathews was ever considered the best dressed man on the stage, and he persuaded others to follow his excellent example.

Charles Kean is often, and I think unfairly, sneered at as "a mere upholsterer." He was far more than that. He was, taking it all-round, a very fair and sometimes an admirable actor, and he strove as hard as a man could strive to beautify and adorn his beloved Shakespeare. If at times he attempted to gild refined gold, and paint the lily, it was a fault in the right direction.

Good old Samuel Phelps never attempted to compete with the stage decorators of his time. He mounted his Shakespeare plays with care, but without lavish expense. He preferred good honest "roast and boiled," a simple wholesome fare, to all the entrées, entremets and kick-shaws in the world.

It cannot be denied that after the Charles Kean and Phelps period, there was an interval of stage squalor and untidiness, a careless slipshod method of dressing the stage.

The Bancrofts came at the right time to reform that vulgarity altogether. It was Marie Bancroft who abolished that sink of iniquity, the "theatrical wardrobe," which was a kind of Petticoat Lane or Houndsditch behind the scenes.

She paid for the modern dresses of the actresses of her company, insisted that they should employ the most approved dressmakers, whilst Squire Bancroft cast

his careful and critical eye over the clothes of the men.

Before the Bancrofts came on the scene we never heard of visits to Paris in order to secure dresses from Worth or Doucet, nor incessant consultations with the celebrated artistic Mr. Hiley of our own English "Jay's."

An old and interesting controversy is always revived in connection with the successful production of "Hamlet," and indeed of any well-known Shakespearean play. When Hamlet appears, for the first time on record, with a dagger as well as a sword; when the Prince of Denmark stands before us in a loose silken jacket edged with sable, pronounced by some to be extremely becoming, and by others to resemble the cast-off garment of a fashionable nineteenth-century lady, or the portion of the trappings of an officer in the Hussars; when the melancholy Dane strolls into the churchyard with a Spanish hat and feathers; the authorities on costume are always up in arms again, and we hear the pleasant prelude to an antiquarian battle.

The friends of Mr. J. R. Planché are then grandly eloquent, and Mr. Percy Fitzgerald deferentially argumentative; the spirits of Sir Samuel Meyrick and Mr. Francis Douce are recalled from their graves, and a greater portion of the discussion on the value of the Charles Kean Shakespearean revivals is set on foot again. Then there is great fun for the antiquaries, and a good time for such as are the happy possessors of note books or accurate diaries. We are invariably reminded of V. Green's fine print after Zoffany of David Garrick, which represents the great actor as playing Macbeth in a full Court dress, embroidered with lace. Notwithstanding the fact that costume and scenery were the important points of John Kemble's

reform of the stage, it is always slyly hinted that the dignified artist first appeared as Hamlet arrayed in a modern Court dress of rich black velvet, with a star on the breast, the garter and riband pendent of an order, mourning sword and buckles with deep ruffles; the hair in powder, which in the scenes of feigned distraction flowed dishevelled in front and over the shoulders.

With the antiquaries there are few matters more important to discuss than Macready's business as Hamlet, of bringing in his sword in his hand when he enters his mother's chamber, and placing it flat down on the table to be used for Polonius presently, the great actor having found it very inconvenient to wear the sword all through the play scene; compared with Mr. Irving's entry with the sword buckled on for use and never cast aside until Polonius is dead, when the weapon is flung into the corner.

The comments on Mr. Fechter's fair long wig and picturesque trappings will pass on to the propriety of Mr. Tom Taylor's strange introduction of a frolic-folie page or maiden, who, armed with a bladder on the end of a stick, whacks Hamlet when he is too meditative, after the fashion of the attendants on the savants in the Isle of Laputa. The "bag wig of Brutus" and the "gold-laced suit of Macbeth," the eccentricity of appearing as John Kemble did in the same character in the military headgear of the 42nd Highlanders until Sir Walter Scott, with his own hands, plucked the huge funeral black plume out of his bonnet, and substituted for it the single broad eagle's feather, the "time-honoured distinction of a Highland chieftain"—all these tit-bits of fact come in handy during the inevitable discussion on costume.

Before placing side by side the enthusiastic arguments of Mr. Planché, and the temperate protests of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, on the subject of the complete accuracy of stage costume, particularly as applied to Shakespeare; before reminding my readers of the scenic assistance given to Mr. John Kemble by a certain M. Capon, whose knowledge of antiquities enabled him to regulate the costume of the different epochs; before telling of that celebrated revival of "*King John*" by Mr. Kemble at Covent Garden in 1823, when Mr. Planché defied conventionality, and, in the teeth of the objections of Mr. Farley and Mr. Fawcett, carried his point and laid the foundations of the brilliancy and accuracy of stage spectacle—it will be well to sketch faintly the birth of costume and rich dress on the stage.

At a time when Mr. Calvert's Manchester revivals were as celebrated as anything of the kind has ever been, when the place so ably filled for so many years by Mr. Planché had properly fallen by common consent to Mr. Alfred Thompson, a diligent student and excellent artist; when "*The Merchant of Venice*" was produced by the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales Theatre, and "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*" by John Hollingshead at the Gaiety, the subject of costume had a particular interest.

The wardrobes of the public theatres were at first but scantily furnished. In masques and other dramatic pieces represented at Court the performers' dresses were very splendid—gold, silver, silk, satin, velvet, and feathers being employed in great profusion. Subsequently, however, the left-off clothes of the nobility and the dresses used in the masques found their way into the player's wardrobe. From a manuscript found at Dulwich College, and dated 1597—1603, we learn that

among the dresses of the Lord Admiral's servants there were an orange tawny satin doublet laid with gold lace, a blue taffeta suit, a pair of carnation satin Venetians laid with gold lace, Harry the Fifth's velvet gown, an ash-coloured satin doublet laid with gold, a pair of cloth of gold hose with silver pins, a long robe with spangles, and many more.

Another part of the same document says that a doublet of white satin laid thick with gold lace and a pair of "rowne parden" hose of cloth of silver said to have cost seven pounds, and some other suits are estimated at thirty-seven pounds. Kings figured in crowns, and globes and sceptres graced their hands. Armour was in common use on the stage; and Greene, in one of his plays, introduces an actor boasting that his share in the stage apparel could not be sold for two hundred pounds.

It was customary for the King and persons of rank to lend state dresses to actors. Thus in 1672, in Lord Orrey's play of "Henry the Fifth," at the Duke's Theatre, the actors Harris, Betterton and Smith wore the coronation suits of the Duke of York, King Charles, and Lord Oxford. Pepys tells us that Charles the Second promised the actors of the King's house (his Majesty's servants) five hundred pounds for robes wherein to enact the play of "Catiline," as no less than sixteen scarlet robes were required; but the play was deferred "for want of the clothes which the King had promised them." There was originally a peculiar dress for actors when engaged in speaking prologues and epilogues. From the induction to "Cynthia's Revels" we learn that the speaker of the prologue entered immediately after the third sounding of the music, attired in a long black velvet cloak. This old custom may be

traced in the fact that in after years the prologue speaker always wore a suit of black. It is done to this day at the Westminster play. The complete dress of the prologue speaker is usually retained in the play scene in "Hamlet."

A Hamlet who, on the one hand, wears a long fair wig because it is eminently suitable to his face, and a Hamlet who on the other hand adopts a Spanish hat and feathers because he may be said to "look well in it," are no doubt extremely wise not to grate upon the feelings and prejudices of the audience by too strict a regard to what may be called the slavery of accuracy. A Mercutio who played the character in a black wig because he was an Italian, or a Romeo who appeared with a dark olive complexion, would startle one; and as no one has yet discovered the period of "Hamlet," it is far better to be a little wide of the mark and picturesque than startling, and very accurate.

This was the great mistake made in Mr. Gilbert's play of "Sweethearts." A point was stretched in favour of ugliness, instead of in the cause of suitability. The error was not repeated in "The Merchant of Venice," as produced by Mr. Bancroft; nor did Sir F. Leighton and Mr. Val Prinsep design Venetian dresses which were unbecoming. On this subject Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has some pregnant and sensible remarks in his "Lives of the Kembles."

"Many years later," he says, "when Charles Kemble was busy with some pretentious revivals, old medals and inscriptions were diligently consulted, and the lengths to which the decoration of Shakespeare was carried\* by the late Charles Kean amounted to an abuse. The truth is, all this minute reproduction of costume and inscrip-

tions, furniture, &c., of a very remote age, the accuracy of which is, besides, doubtful or based on speculation, is misplaced on the stage.

“It should be always remembered that the whole interest of stage enjoyment is found in character and mental action; the rest—scenery, decoration, dresses, &c.—should be as it were sufficiently ‘indicated’ so far as not to have anything discordant. Charles Lamb protested justly that the mere placing of a character like Lear on the stage made a soul that was almost infinite in its grandeur and sublimity earthly and mean; and on the same principle a too great realism in scenery and dresses levels the dignity of the drama to the prosy measure of every-day life. But there is a further objection. The fantastic discoveries of archæological science, the odd and eccentric types of costume and furniture, which are guessed at and spelt out of illuminated MSS., and medals, are all unfamiliar, and, though possibly correct, were not present even to those who wrote the plays thus illustrated. They are less present to the mind of the audience.

“There is besides no guarantee that there have not been mistakes in the treatment and manipulation of what might have been right in the main. There are certain conventional types of costume and illustration to which an audience is accustomed and which indicate sufficiently the era to which the piece belongs; and this is all that is required, all that will harmonise with the grand object of interest, the progress of character, and the action of the drama.

“Go beyond this, and we shall have to employ an army of builders, carpenters, furniture makers and upholsterers and who will have almost to work at their trades between the acts. The realism of scenery, departing

from the natural principle of 'indication,' has led to an extravagance that will be content with nothing less than a literal reproduction of the object itself in all its entirety. If a crowd or an army is to be introduced, nothing will suffice but a crowd or an army almost as vast as a real one.

"When the books of the Camden Society or the Calendars of State Papers are to be studied to set off a drama the result will be thrown away on the persons who are legitimately thinking of the play, and only the stray antiquary will truly appreciate such labour."

Mr. Percy Fitzgerald repeats the same views at greater length and with more elaboration in his book called "*The Principles of Comedy and Dramatic Effect.*" It cannot have been forgotten that they were endorsed generally by both Mr. Bateman and Mr. Irving at the Lyceum, however much they may have been contradicted when "*The School for Scandal*" was produced by Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales Theatre, or by M. Sardou and M. Offenbach, who produced at the Gaieté in Paris a melodrama called "*La Haine*," which "out-heroded-Herod" in realism, decoration, battles, processions, armour, and spectacle.

It is only fair, however, to give the counter argument of the veteran antiquary, Mr. Planché, who was the adviser of Mr. Kemble, and the prime mover in the revival.

"I can perfectly understand," says Mr. Planché, "'King John,' or any other historical play, being acted in plain evening dress without any scenery at all, and interpreted by great actors interesting the audience to such a degree that imagination would supply the picturesque accessories to them as sufficiently as it does



to the reader of the play in his study. But go one step beyond this—what conventional attire could be assumed by the performers that would be endured in these days by the least critical playgoers? If the King is to be crowned, what would be the conventional shape of the diadem? If a Knight is to be armed, what would be the conventional character of the armour? Are we to ignore the information which has been obtained on such subjects because it may not be perfectly correct, and wilfully present to the public that which we know to be perfectly erroneous, thereby falsely impressing the minds of the uneducated, whose instruction, as well as amusement, is the bounden duty of the stage?"

Very well spoken, Mr. Planché, but then Mr. Fitzgerald said that there are certain conventional types of costume which indicate sufficiently the era required. The subject is interesting, and the spokesmen eloquent. As it happened, the managers of the Lyceum and Gaiety Theatre followed the lead of Percy Fitzgerald; whilst Mr. Calvert, of Manchester, and the Bancrofts were staunch supporters of the principles of Planché.

I am anxious to recall, after so many years, what I wrote about the production of Sheridan's "School for Scandal," by Mr. Bancroft, at the little Prince of Wales Theatre, in April, 1874:—

"We would beg all who approach the discussion of the merit or demerit of the revival of Sheridan's 'School for Scandal,' at a theatre which has justly obtained distinction for its high tone and intellectual aspirations, to do so in a manly, robust and generous spirit.

"It will be necessary to view the condition of the stage, to regard carefully the fruit of the past few years, and to make predictions concerning the harvest to come.

We must especially consider the modest spirit and the hearty earnestness which have heralded the present revival. We take it for granted that no dramatic establishment in the metropolis is entitled to more sympathy and respect. At a time when we are reaping the fruits of conscientious study and artistic accuracy, when the good and the promising are so ruthlessly sifted from the indifferent and the careless, we must generously remember that little theatre which for nigh upon ten years has been doing such excellent work.

"We may say what we like about the influence and the bearing upon dramatic literature of Mr. Robertson and his plays; we may argue this way and argue that; we may protest that this comedy would have been a failure on this stage, and that play would have been ridiculed on another; we may sneer at the diminutive effects; we may protest that it was all luck, or all this, that and the other; we may have our views about the intention of Lord Lytton or the meaning of Mr. Wilkie Collins—but this one thing we cannot conscientiously deny, and that is, that, whether devoting its strength, its industry, its unwearied application and its artistic appreciation to the works of Robertson, Lytton, or Wilkie Collins, the Prince of Wales Theatre and the Prince of Wales company have done what they wished to do boldly and well, and have left their mark upon the drama of our time.

"It is the essence of the Prince of Wales system to be unconventional without being extravagant or affected. No theatre has, on the whole, been more unconventional than that presided over by Mrs. Bancroft; no theatre has so systematically protested against the old-fashioned and obstinate tradition; no playhouse has more continually been guided by common sense. So, failing a

new author and failing a new play, the management takes in hand the most popular stage work in the English language. It is a fair field to work upon. It matters little that the 'School for Scandal' has been done to death on other stages. It is of slight consequence that in almost every character we possess an ideal.

"We may have heard of King, and seen Terry, as well as William Farren. We may have read of Mrs. Abington and Mr. Palmer. We may pin our faith to Phelps, or Helen Faucit, or Creswick, or who you will—but here with this play, held in universal respect, teeming with dramatic memories, done to death in barn, and playhouse, and back drawing-room, we maintain that still there is something to be done with it.

"Strengthened by a long experience and a careful study, the Prince of Wales management takes a good old play in hand, and uses it as a vehicle for reproducing accurately and consistently the exact period at which it was written by its youthful author. It was in the year 1777 that Sheridan produced the 'Trip to Scarborough' and the 'School for Scandal,' both at Drury Lane—the one on February 24th, the other on May 8th. It was at the close of a brilliant period of costume, and on the very eve of a sudden change from bob and tie wigs, from pyramids of powder, plumes, and pomatum, to the simpler attire worn by gentlemen in 1780.

"George the Third was on the throne of England; Lord North was nursing his coercive policy; we were in the heat of the American war; Washington was being defeated at Philadelphia; the Earl of Chatham was on the eve of his death; Dr. Dodd was being executed for forgery; and Horne Tooke was close upon his trial for

'a seditious declaration,' when Sheridan's masterpiece saw the footlights at Drury Lane.

"How excellent a thing, thinks the careful Prince of Wales management, in reviving this stage classic, 'to reproduce with it a picture of these interesting times ! The 'School for Scandal' shall not only be a play ; it shall be a picture of the history of that day. We will do more than interest you in the squabbles of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle ; in the careless vivacity of Charles ; in the hypocritical duplicity of Joseph. We will show you how society flourished in 1777 ; how people walked, talked, dressed and behaved. We will give you a picture of society drinking tea and talking scandal, of powdered ladies in their satin boudoirs and their feet upon amber cushions ; of an age of marqueterie and teak and tulip-wood ; of long trains, powdered hair, and black pages.

"We will show you how well-bred women danced a minuet to music played by a stringed band and a gorgeously-decorated spinet. We will reproduce for you a polished and fantastic time of low curtsies, lower bows, gold snuff-boxes and clouded canes. We will revive for you a roystering party of half-tipsy blades drinking their punch and claret and champagne, in silk coats, lace ruffles, and knee breeches, in clocked hose and diamond shoe-buckles, whilst some snuff and many more smoke long Dutch clay pipes.

"You have seen the picture often in water-colour drawings. You shall see it, and be impressed by it, on the stage. And, more than this, without arrogance or affectation, we propose, in no spirit of vandalism, to show how Sheridan might have improved his comedy had he seen the importance of eliminating his carpenter scenes and confining each act to one picture. Without

revising the construction it will be impossible to carry out this rule entirely ; but it is quite possible quietly to suggest what an advantage it would have been had Sheridan paid as much attention to construction as to dialogue.

“In this good and proper spirit the ‘School for Scandal’ has been taken in hand, the artists determined to do their best, and the management convinced that any sincere contribution to art would be warmly welcomed and honestly valued.

“The result is such as to gratify those interested in the wellbeing of the stage, and to call down hearty admiration from those who admire a generous determination to do the best with the resources at hand. Putting aside for a moment individual efforts—many of them crowned with complete success—we may take it for granted that the primary object for reproducing a picture of society in 1777 is attained in a manner which exceeded the very warmest expectations.

“There are four complete and accurate pictures of high life at the close of the last century, We are shown society at Lady Sneerwell’s drawing-room ; society in Sir Peter Teazle’s house ; society in Charles Surface’s lodgings ; and, finally, a complete insight into the life of Joseph Surface.

“Come then to Lady Sneerwell’s. It is the morning of a great rout or assembly. The amber satin curtains are half pulled up the lofty windows. The sunshine falls upon the quilted panels of spotless gold satin. Lady Sneerwell, in powder and brocade, sits sipping her tea out of faultless china in a high marqueterie chair, her feet upon a cushion of luxurious down. The appearance of the room is dazzling. The tone of society is lavish and lazy luxury.

"Here comes Mrs. Candour, with her fan and her scandalous stories; Crabtree, with his richly-embroidered coat; Sir Benjamin Backbite, in pink silk, and with his mincing, macaroni airs, with his point-lace handkerchief, and his scented snuff; and here, amongst all this gaudiness, frivolity, and affectation, sits poor Maria, proud of her virtue, and detesting the shallowness and affectation of the age in which she was born.

"Change the scene quickly to Lady Sneerwell's drawing-room at night, and contrast it, by means of your ready sense of humour, with the racing, romping drawing-room of 1874. The amber satin curtains have fallen to the ground. The spinet and the powdered musicians are wheeled away to a corner. The room is bared of furniture and empty for a dance. Listen how the guests chatter and flatter one another, seated on rout seats against the wall. They do not discuss the weather, or think anything 'awfully jolly,' or consider any one 'dreadfully much too nice,' or tear round to the strains of a maddening galop, or assume that painfully distressed look inseparable from the modern valse, or perspire, or pant, or exhaust themselves.

"They take snuff with an air and bow with courtly gravity. They turn a verse or recite an epigram. Sir Benjamin Backbite is pestered for his latest folly, and Mrs. Candour is teased for her last bit of scandal.

"But, see, Lady Teazle enters, her train held by a negro page boy, and all eyes are attracted by her diamonds, while all tongues are wagging about the young wife who has married an old bachelor. The music gives out the first bars of a glorious minuet, and tells us of the days when musicians wrote for dancing, and when dancing was an art.

“Sir Benjamin Backbite leads out Lady Teazle, and Crabtree just touches the fingers of Lady Sneerwell. With consummate grace and delightful courtesy they commence a minuet. What a delicate affectation of refinement, what a meaning in every gesture and movement!

“Look at Lady Sneerwell. With what exquisite art she manages her brocaded train; see how she points her faultless feet, and springs to every bar of the stately melody. We know not which most to admire,—the refined orchestration, or the studied courtesy of the polished dance. This is the drawing-room society of 1777.

“Change the scene again to an inner apartment at Sir Peter Teazle’s. The semi-circular shape of the room is seized as an opportunity for exhibiting some tapestry, which may have come from the manufactory of Sir Francis Crane, at Mortlake, in Surrey, may have been picked up in Flanders, or Bayeux, or Gobelins, dated in the reign of Louis Quatorze. A rare chandelier, suspended by a crimson silken cord, contrasts well with the carved oak ceiling. A mandolin lies neglected on the floor, and the whole apartment is rich, heavy and luxurious—the favourite apartment of a wealthy man of taste.

“Here Sir Peter welcomes his old friend ‘Noll’; here Lady Teazle, sitting on a low stool at his feet, pets and coaxes her testy and withal affectionate old husband.

“Once more we make a change. We are amongst bachelors, and dice players, and wine bibbers. We are in the extravagant home of Charles Surface, where his servant Trip borrows money by way of annuity, and the popular Charles sits at the head of a rollicking crew surrounded by the pictures of his ancestors. How

they drink, and talk, and sing and swear! How they drink pint bumpers of claret and quart goblets of champagne! How they empty the punch bowl, carefully and continually replenished by the drawling Trip!

"Here, at the head of the table, sits Charles Surface, in a costume whose colour can only be compared to that of a blue convolvulus ruined by the sun, his vest unbuttoned, his ruffles loosened, and his whole being abandoned to the gaiety of the moment. Moses and Premium are introduced, mutually pleased and shocked. The family pictures are sold *coram populo*, without any necessity of retiring to another room. Some are smoking, some are snuffing, all are drinking, laughing, and making merry. All round are colour, riches, animation, and revelry.

"This, then, is the picture of bachelor life in 1777. Here we see the wild oats sown. The scene is hushed and still when we come to the library of Joseph Surface. The picture is in wonderful contrast to the banquet at the home of his brother Charles. The furniture is massive, heavy and important. The bookcases are of oak, as black as ebony. The windows are of painted glass. The fireplace is as carved and pillared as an old cathedral cope chest. The bindings of the books are of Russia leather, and there are ponderous tomes amongst them. The carpet is of thick pile, and from Turkey. The only contrast of colour in the room is found in the oriental blue vases on the mantel-shelf, in the blue delft dishes on the walls, in the polished brass of the coal scuttle, in the gleam of the Venetian mirror, and the dull crimson of the all-important screen.

"These probably are the mere ideas sought to be conveyed to the audience by the beautiful pictures placed



before them. It is intended to reproduce, with accuracy and finish, life at the close of the last century ; and it only remains for us to add that the pictures are real pictures, the furniture and decorations all real, the guests real guests, the servants real servants, and the illusion so far complete. This is the impression left behind by the general performance.

“When we approach the individual sketches of character our task is necessarily more difficult ; for here we meet the same daring spirit of unconventionality, the same enthusiastic hunger after new ideas and new readings. If comparisons were not odious no comparisons could be made in this instance. For, as in the scenery and decorations the object has been to show what has never been done before, so in the acting there is a strong effort shown to make it harmonise with the new realism which has been attached to the old play. Each one and all, whether for good or ill, discard traditions, old business, and well-worn effects. Each one and all think and act for themselves. We cannot still help fancying that there are points of rare ingenuity introduced in the revival which will astonish those with whom every line, every scene, and every bit of business is familiar. The performances specially distinguished for their careful and intricate study, as, indeed, they are the most important, are, the Lady Teazle of Mrs. Bancroft, the Sir Peter Teazle of Mr. Hare, the Joseph Surface of Mr. Bancroft, and the Charles Surface of Mr. Coghlan.

“At last we obtain—at least in modern days—a Lady Teazle who is a fresh, genuine, impulsive country maiden wedded to an old bachelor, and not the practised actress, with all her airs and graces. How often in Lady Teazle the character is forgotten, the actress and

the old business invariably remembered! In the scandal scenes, we are presented with an archness and sly sense of humour always evident but never superabundant, in which Mrs. Bancroft has a special patent; in the coaxing scene with Sir Peter Teazle, the child-like desire to kiss and make friends, the almost kitten-like content when the reconciliation is made, and the expressive change of the countenance from sunshine to storm when the wrangle commences again, were admirably conveyed.

"But it was reserved for Mrs. Bancroft to make her most lasting impression in the screen scene. With wonderful care and welcome art, the impression conveyed to an innocent mind by the insinuating deceit of Joseph was accurately shown by expression to the audience, though the excellence of the general idea culminated in what is known as Lady Teazle's defence, when the screen has fallen and the *dénouement* has taken place. This was entirely new and thoroughly effected.

"The tones alternating between indignation and pathos, between hatred of Joseph and pity for her husband's condition, were expressed with excellent effect. It was the frank and candid avowal of a but now repentant woman. The womanly instinct bids Lady Teazle touch and try to kiss her husband, the womanly weakness which makes Lady Teazle totter and trip as she makes for the door of the hated room, the womanly strength which steels Lady Teazle in her refusal of assistance from Joseph, and the inevitable abandonment to hysterical grief just before the heroic goal is reached—were one and all instances of treasured possession of an artistic temperament.

"How loyally and well Mr. Hare would assist such a

performance we all know, and how the performance in itself, brought into relief by Mr. Hare's good taste, we must be all convinced. Without such a Sir Peter, who refines everything to a nicety, who remembers the tone and character of the old English gentleman and studiously forgets the coarseness and, we may add, the grossness, which has been attached to the character by tradition, how much less expression would have been obtained in the great scene with Lady Teazle! Surely a young actor can play Sir Peter Teazle without being obstinately compared with such geniuses as are identified with the character; and we may well congratulate Mr. Hare on successfully passing through a most harassing and almost overwhelming ordeal. It is difficult to shake the conviction of any one; and with old playgoers old memories are necessarily dear; but it will be gratefully remembered that in Sir Peter Teazle, Mr. Hare, true to his art, discarded those coarse efforts which are so telling, and, remembering his own standard and outlook of the character, played it with evenness and finish, and like a refined and well-bred gentleman.

The Joseph Surface of Mr. Bancroft, in that it is one of the most original and reflective performances, will attract criticism—will probably meet with the most object criticism. Mr. Fechter played Iago, and discarded the harsh villain, there was a similar disturbance. According to stage tradition, Iago and Joseph are such outrageous and obvious rascals that they would not be tolerated in any society. Mr. Bancroft reforms this altogether, and, by a subtlety and an ease most commendable, valuably strengthens his position as an actor and his discrimination as an artist. Joseph Surface can be played as a low, cunning villain, or as a hungry, excited, and abandoned libertine. Mr. Bancroft adopts

the golden mean. His deception is never on the surface, his libertinism is never for an instant repulsive. Not altogether striking or showy at first sight, it is, however, one of those striking instances of good acting which strike the beholder when the curtain is down and the play put away.

"We arrive by slow degrees to the Charles Surface of Mr. Coghlan, concerning which there can scarcely be two opinions; for here we arrive at a result so striking and so decisive that we do not stop to ponder, to question, or to compare. It is surely Charles Surface. In look, in bearing, in talk, in gaiety, in abandonment, and in heart it is Charles Surface. No wonder that Sir Oliver loves the lad, no wonder that old Rowley swears by him through thick and thin. He can be unsteady without being coarse and drunken, he can be merry without being loud, he can chaff when the screw has fallen without being cruel. In every picture in which he stands he is the central figure. He falls into poses without posing. He thinks, or appears to think, when he is not talking.

"How admirable is the touch when Sir Oliver, anxious to become the purchaser of his own picture, the young man kneels on the settee before it and is lost in a reverie of old days and old kindnesses! It is not an affected or strained pose, Charles Surface falls into it naturally, and as naturally awakes from the dream. He has been thinking, in his manly generous fashion, of favours done, and too long since forgotten, of his old friend, his old uncle, his own flesh and blood. And when the dream is over, without effort he sits down, half musing, and hurriedly tells the old Premium he refuses to sell the old picture. This is the acting of suggestion, and is of all acting the most pleasing and

valuable. And the character of Charles Surface, as painted by Mr. Coghlan, is rife with such suggestions.

"It is only fair to add that the re-arrangement of the scenes of the play, and the most difficult task of inventing and suggesting the majority of the business, fell to the care of Mr. Coghlan, who had a willing band full of suggestion, thought and fancy. The Sir Oliver Surface of Mr. Collette seemed in unctuous geniality, a little too marked, but in any pathetic touches admirably true; the Sir Benjamin Backbite of Mr. Lin Rayne, admirable in idea, but occasionally a little crude in execution; the Crabtree of Mr. A. Wood and the Mrs. Candour of Mrs. Leigh Murray, both meritorious in their way; the Trip of Mr. Markby, too deliberate to be effective; and both the Careless and Maria of Mr. Herbert and Miss B. Wilton, the fruits of study in an excellent school. Special mention should be decidedly reserved for the Lady Sneerwell—Miss Fanny Josephs—a small character, <sup>it is,</sup> though what character is small in the hands of an artist? Following the example so frequently and unselfishly set by Mrs. Bancroft for so many years, Miss Josephs took the small, and, as it is called, ungrateful character, and made her mark. The dancing of Miss Fanny Josephs in the introduced minuet would have astonished the most critical grandmother. One can well believe in the old-fashioned horror of waltzes and polkas when we see such charming grace and true elegance as this. In a word, then, one and all do their best. The same profound respect and admiration for art which inspire the performances of Molière and Corneille and Racine at the Français, actuate the efforts of Mrs. Bancroft's company with Sheridan. There can be no question that such efforts will meet their reward in success."

And now for the reverse of the picture : the acknowledged failure of the Bancroft production of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" at the little Tottenham Court Road Theatre, on the 19th of April, 1875. This is what I said, and it may be put forward as an example of that independence of criticism, that frankness of opinion, and that earnest desire to give art its proper expression and value, which were ever encouraged by my old friend Mr. J. M. Levy, and his colleagues on the *Daily Telegraph*. We were all friends, newspaper editors and proprietors, critics, actors, actresses, everybody. But the right word had to be spoken about Shakespeare in the band-box, and it was spoken with the full consent and approval of those in power. I am bound to say that never in one instance, from the first moment that I criticised the Bancrofts, until the evening of their farewell, when I chronicled their regretted departure from the stage, have I ever heard one cry of resentment from either of them, even under the bitterest pang of disappointment. They courted criticism, and they accepted it. But they happily made their name and fame at a period anterior to the existence of Actors' Trade Unions, which are permitted to-day to dictate to the powers of journalism as to the writers they should employ, and the policy they should adopt. It is a policy self-doomed, and one that will degrade and stultify the actor's art as swiftly as it has been perhaps unduly and unnecessarily elevated, seeing that the freedom obtained for them has roused their sense of proportion !

"From whatever side we approach the latest Shakespearean experiment we are met by disappointment. There should have been strong grounds for disturbing

the peaceful and interesting life at the Prince of Wales Theatre, for interrupting a useful and in many respects a valuable career, for breaking up a school distinguished for the finish of its style and the grace of its scholarship, for putting aside the plays which were never received without applause, and for sending into temporary retirement the artists whose good work has conquered the old prejudices against the modern stage.

"It may be true that one theatre cannot go on playing Robertson for ever, although we remark that no such observation has ever been made by those who derive their enjoyment from this particular school; it may be natural that even success is monotonous and change is exciting; it is not probable that the growing taste for the higher drama has been noticed with pleasure by those who think they have the means of cultivating it. But now that the alteration has been made, what do we find in exchange? Beautiful pictures containing no incident, superb robes for the covering of shadows, a city of romance denied its idealism, subject matter sacrificed for marvellous detail, character put on one side for cameos, and frescoes substituted for fancy, the glory of the upholsterer and the neglect of the poet, the play subordinate to the decorator. Shakespeare existing only in name, a Venice without a story, and the 'Merchant of Venice' without a Shylock.

"It is said that those whose duty it is to provide the public with amusements are the very best judges of the prevailing taste. The rule is not universal, and we should regret to find that the new 'Merchant of Venice' either represented public opinion or the outcome of it. Our experience does not lead us to believe that modern comedy was ever found tasteless at this theatre, that old English classical comedy was in any way exhausted,

that there was ever lack of encouragement for such artistic experiments as 'Sweethearts,' or appreciation of such an artist as Mrs. Bancroft, neither does any study of the stage, however cursory, justify the assertion that the new Shakespeare should be a mere decorative revival.

"All honour to those who adorn the plays of Shakespeare and the comedies of Sheridan; and in this good and devoted work the management of this theatre has been generously conspicuous. But it will be disheartening if the existing public interest in the higher drama had no nobler motive; it would be worse than disappointing if dramatic art found no better expression. We believe that in this instance a curious mistake has been made, and that existing taste has unintentionally been misrepresented.

"The stage is something more than a picture gallery. We go to the theatre to think, as well as to see. No one for a moment disputes the value of all this archaeological study, the beauty of these marvellous stage pictures, the accuracy and completeness of the detail, or the depth of the research. But there is a higher value in the 'Merchant of Venice' than in Venetian pictures and the perfection of Venetian costume.

"It is pleasant enough to be taken under the arches of the Doge's Palace, to admire the carved capitals of the pillars, to watch the picturesque water carriers as they pass, to seem to hear the ripple of the water as the gondolas glide on, and to recall the pleasure of the warm and blue Venetian sky. It is delightful, no doubt, to be introduced to these beautiful Venetian ladies at Belmont, clothed in brocade of blue or robes of peach blossom, to watch them reclining on soft couches, toying with illuminated volumes, or dreaming under the influence of hidden music.



“The Prince of Morocco approaches with his splendid train, the heavy curtains of tapestry rise and fall, the caskets are set forth, one procession succeeds another, and each is more magnificent than the last. Lovely enough this Venetian life at Belmont. The scene changes to the lanes at Venice. It is no imaginative picture. We are there. Every brick, every window, the shape of the penthouse, the creeper climbing over it, the melon seller in the projecting building, the posts to which the gondolas are moored, the steps leading to the Venetian alleys—nothing could well be more life-like and admirable. Lorenzo comes to serenade Jessica—it is of little interest. Shylock locks his doors; but the Jew is of no consequence whatever. Jessica talks from the balcony, and she is scarcely listened to.

“The finest passages in the play occur, and fall dead upon the audience. We have not come to hear a play to-night, but to see the lanes of Venice.

“Once more we are taken to the Sala della Bussola. The frescoes on the wall are of rare beauty—every chair, every table, every footstool, has its original in Venice. When the most dramatic scene ever given us by Shakespeare is being enacted it makes no impression. Shylock is but a shadow, in a crowd of shadows. Portia tells us about mercy, but her sentiments fall unheeded on our ear. The Jew sharpens his knife, but half the spectators cannot follow him owing to the cramped and crowded stage. There is a rattle of scales, and some allusion to a pound of flesh; but not a pulse in the audience is stirred, not one heart beats for Antonio, not one sentiment is expressed for or against Shylock, or one way or the other.

“Who, indeed, can wonder at it, when no attempt has been made from the very commencement to enlist

the sympathies, to excite the attention, or arouse the slightest interest in the audience? What does it matter if an interesting trial is proceeding in the Sala della Bussola, when we look at the magnificent costume of a Doge of Venice, notice that Venetians use tasselled pocket-handkerchiefs, obtain information regarding Venetian halberdiers, and the shape of a Jewish gabardine?

"There is a flutter of comedy at the end of the act, but it soon dies out. The last act, carefully weeded of its best poetry and its most attractive qualities, passes quietly away, and the Venetian panorama is over.

"Every opportunity has been taken to show us Venice by means of 'tableaux vivants' and painted pictures; for in between the scenes some charming views of the city, painted on drop-curtains by Mr. Gordon, have been exhibited. Youth is proverbially eccentric, and young actors may be expected occasionally to give us some original views on well-known Shakespearean characters.

"It was reserved for Mr. Coghlan, however, to discover that Shylock is an absolute inanimate being, without force, without movement, without love, without hate, without expression. We take down the words of old critics and read their discussions on this marvellous creation, showing how far his vengeance was justified, and how much he is to be pitied for his position. We discuss with interest the accounts of the greatest actors in the part, and find how audiences were swayed by them and stirred by them. And then, with astonishment, we remember the Shylock of Mr. Coghlan. It is not a question whether Shylock should be young or old, whether he should wear a red beard as they did before Edmund Kean's time, a grey beard, a black beard, a grizzled beard, or a moustache. The audience is not left

hesitating whether too much power is shown here or too little there. None of these points enter into the calculation. At this period of our history we are seriously asked by a clever actor whether it is not more natural to allow Shylock to walk through the play, and to be made an utterly subordinate and insignificant person.

“It is impossible to believe that Mr. Coghlan seriously hopes to make converts to this new dramatic faith, or that he can have any arguments to support his eccentric theory. If Shylock is to express no feeling towards Antonio one way or the other; if he is to describe the insults levelled at him with no energy; if he is to show no love to his daughter, no greed for his gold, no eagerness for his revenge, to take up no position at the trial, and to appear merely as a moody, sulky, and uninteresting person, it would be difficult to say what value there is in the ‘Merchant of Venice’ as a stage play?

“This new theory of natural acting will not hold water for an instant. If the ‘Merchant of Venice’ is to be interesting to the audience, Shylock must act, and not walk through the part. The serious want of interest felt through the whole representation was due in a great measure to the Shylock. This character alone can put the whole machinery in motion; but Mr. Coghlan refused to stir it. For a long time the audience felt that the actor must be holding himself in reserve, that he was missing his constant opportunities for the sake of the trial scene, that he was keeping back his energies for one grand and final outburst. But it was not so.

“The trial scene was the very weakest portion of this extraordinary performance, which gave the audience no idea that the actor appreciated or even understood the character. The ‘Merchant of Venice’ without a Shylock is not an interesting entertainment.

"Fortunately, however, there was pleasant consolation found from the Portia of Miss Ellen Terry, one of those ideal pictures which occasionally decorate our stage. They will say that it was not Portia because it is perhaps like no other Portia ever seen by Shakespearean students, so fresh and charming is the representation, so fair and gentle is the lovely Venetian lady. No traces of the stage were here, no renewal of old business, no suggestion of immemorial traditions. Miss Terry, in her beautiful robes, looked as if she had stepped out of a canvas by Mr. Leighton. She took us back to old Venice quite as much as Mr. Godwin's 'archæological research,' and Mr. Gordon's charming pictures.

"Treasured among the memories of this theatre, so celebrated for its examples of refined comedy, will be the love scene between Bassanio and Portia, and the expression in it of a maiden's wooing. Linger long on the recollection will be the comedy scenes of this play in which Miss Terry took part. This is indeed very perfect acting, in the style of art which cannot be taught. It is not, perhaps, the Portia of the stage, but it is the very poetry of acting; and the result is all the more satisfactory since Miss Ellen Terry's complete success was constantly threatened by a paralysis of nervousness which was resisted with extreme difficulty.

"From the long list of actors engaged on this important work Mr. Archer's Antonio deserves, we think, the highest praise. There was merit, no doubt, in the Bassanio of Mr. E. H. Brooke, and he read the letter from his friend with true and touching pathos; there was humour in the Launcelot of Mr. A. Wood, a character rather cruelly treated by the stage arrangement; there were dignity and discretion in Mr. Bancroft's assumption of the small character of the Prince of

Morocco ; but Mr. Archer's Antonio stands prominently out for its dignity, its clear and admirable elocution, and its tone of subdued and tender melancholy. The sprightly humour of Nerissa, so valuable to the scenes of comedy, was lost sight of by Miss Carlotta Addison ; but, on the whole, the minor characters were efficiently represented.

"The first performance of Shakespeare at this theatre brought with it a noisy and captious audience, apparently determined to make unnecessary calls, and to laugh at costumes they chose to consider ridiculous ; but experience shows that such little outbursts as these have their origin very frequently in the feeling of disappointment to which we have ventured to allude.

"Every play produced at this theatre has a distinct and peculiar interest of its own, whether it be by Robertson, Sheridan, or Shakespeare. There is so much beauty in the Venetian scenes, and so much scattered merit in the play, that doubtless playgoers will not consider they have done their dramatic duty until they have seen the 'Merchant of Venice,' and criticised it for themselves. It will be well to do so.

"No harm will be done by an experiment of this kind, if it purchases a certain experience. The value of leaving well alone may be learned by it, but the welcome to Mrs. Bancroft will not be the less hearty when she returns to take possession of her little home on the departure of her new tenant William Shakespeare."

If the Bancrofts' version of the "Merchant of Venice" proved a failure, it was at any rate an honourable one. They did not try to bolster up failure with falsehood. They did not instantly declare that in spite of failure, the theatre had held more than it had ever held

before. They did not ~~paraphrase~~ paragraph a failure, or, in more homely words, "cry stinking fish." For the Bancrofts were not the sort of managers to cry over spilt milk. The box-office sheet was their barometer. When it registered "stormy," away went the play, and something else was put into immediate rehearsal. And, after all, the failures at the "little theatre" were comparatively few and rare.

Amongst the most conspicuous were the "Wrinkles" of Henry J. Byron; the "Tame Cats" of Edmund Yates; and "How She Loves Him" by Dion Boucicault.

Some years after "Tame Cats" had failed, I was sitting at the Adelphi Theatre next to Edmund Yates in the last row of stalls, with the front row of the pit immediately behind it. During an interval Yates got up and stretched his great burly frame, and, with the well-known twinkle in his eye, said in a loud voice,

"Well, Clement, have you ever sat out a more miserable play than this, or attended such a complete failure?"

There was a pause, and a lady in the pit in an audible voice said to a female friend,

"I say, dear, did you ever see 'Tame Cats'?"

Edmund punched me in the ribs and roared with laughter. He was not angry, as he had an intense appreciation of humour. He had been "hoist with his own petard." That was all.

How little did I dream that it would be in the stalls of a theatre that I should see the almost tragic end of my kind old friend, who had always helped and encouraged me from days of boyhood, printing some of the first verses I ever wrote in the *Temple Bar Magazine*, which I considered a great honour.

The regretted end came at the Garrick Theatre, when Mrs. Bancroft was playing the part of Lady Franklin in Bulwer Lytton's "Money." Edmund Yates came in late, looking dreadfully ill, and altered, from the jovial stalwart fellow we had known and loved.

We shook hands as he passed my stall, and he said, "This will awaken a good many memories for us to-night, Clement." My wife, who was by my side, looked up quickly; whereupon Yates smiled, and told her in his well known funny style the memories would contain nothing to cause her any jealousy. During the waits between the acts, to the delight of the younger critics, he indulged in entertaining reminiscences, mainly about the art of Marie Bancroft. Weak as he was, the familiar old chuckle had not deserted him; and I remember, after the scene between Lady Franklin and Graves, that poor Edmund said to me,

"Clement, if a man were dying he would have to laugh at that wonderful little woman!"

Prophetic utterance! A few hours after the speaker was dead.

My wife and I were almost the last to file out of the stalls, for it was on a Saturday night, and I had no need to hurry to the office.

Suddenly I was conscious of a dull thud on the floor. "Clem, Clem!" called out my wife, "a gentleman has fallen down in a fit." Before I had time to turn round I said,

"Good God! It must be Edmund Yates."

And so it was. We were the first to go to his assistance, and I helped to lift him to his seat. But we saw it was all over. He never spoke again.

And then the next day, that dreary, melancholy

Sunday, I had to write a bright cheerful notice of the revival of "Money," and after that was done an obituary notice of my dear old friend Edmund Yates, who was one of the best fellows in the world. He was candid, free, outspoken, manly, and his candour was of service to society and the world. He made enemies, as all independent critics and writers must, but he never did a mean thing. He preferred the misery and isolation of Holloway Prison to any sacrifice of journalistic independence, and he would have been the last man in the world, when the shout was raised by a cabal, "Ad leones!" to have joined in it in order to protect his personal interests. With him any "Dreyfus of the Drama" would have had fair play. The son of an actor, he did not fear an army of actors when it waged war against freedom of utterance and independence of opinion! He went to prison sooner than betray the confidence of a contributor to the *World*, and in addition to his sharp tongue he had, what few cynics possess—a heart of gold.

Yes, the path of an outspoken dramatic journalist to-day is not one of roses. "It ain't all lavender," as the well-known comic song says.

Not so very long after there was another sad Sunday in store for me.

We had been out dining, and returned home dead tired, waiting sleep as a refresher for the black Monday to follow.

There came a knocking at the door. I really felt too tired to go down stairs, ascribing the knocking to some "strayed reveller."

So I put my head out of the window and saw a mysterious figure on the pavement.



"Clement Scott?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Anything serious?"

"Yes, murder."

"Murder! Who has been murdered?"

"Arthur Dacre has shot his wife (Amy Roselle), and committed suicide in Australia."

They were both intimate friends of mine.

So, taken in charge by a good fellow from the office in Fleet Street who was anxious to assist me, books of reference had to be hunted up, careers checked, and a column or so written on the spot for the Monday paper. These are necessary but not pleasant tasks, but the journalist is nothing if not loyal. He sacrifices himself at a pinch, and expects a similar self-sacrifice when he finds himself in a tight corner. And so it used to be, and so it will be again before long.

It is more cheerful to reflect that I was lucky enough to be connected wholly or in part with a few of the successes of the old Prince of Wales and Haymarket Theatre under the Bancrofts.

I was part adaptor of "Peril" and "Diplomacy," and adaptor of "Odette" and "The Vicarage."

In all these experiments I found my old friend Squire Bancroft one of the very best editors I ever came across. Had he not been an actor and a manager, he would have been an ideal editor of any paper, daily or weekly.

In all these experiments, my collaborator "Charley Stephenson" did the arrangement and such reconstruction as was wanted; I did the writing, and Bancroft was general adviser and editor.

A journalist who writes for the stage is always apt to write too much; but any journalist would have been safe

in the judicious hands of Bancroft, who used the "blue pencil" with admirable discretion.

"Diplomacy" was the result of "three single gentlemen rolled into one." Stephenson, Bancroft, and I saw Sardou's "Dora" in Paris. That it was worth handling for the English stage was unanimously declared before we went to bed that night. We agreed that, if carefully handled, there might be a little fortune in it; but we also unanimously agreed that Sardou's second act must go by the board, and that if possible Acts I. and II. of the original must be boiled down into one. This was done; and of course I need scarcely say that Act I. of "Diplomacy" is not its best act. No "Dora" I have ever seen quite understood the scene with the mother, and its capabilities.

We also agreed to make it an English play. Stephenson helped the scheme with his Treasury, Foreign Office, and private secretary experiences. The happy thought came to me of the "Jingo" element, the tracings of the Constantinople fortifications, and the Imperialist tone in the play to which Mr. Brander Matthews and other critics so much object. Bancroft's advice was invaluable on every possible occasion.

By the time we had arrived in London, indeed, I think before we had crossed the Channel homewards, our plan was decided. Then I did all the writing; and Bancroft did all the editing, act by act, and scene by scene, in consultation of course with his brilliantly clever wife, who subsequently introduced the "Clock Scene at Berne," which is her own invention and writing. My two titles were "The Mouse Trap" and "Diplomacy." It was "Diplomacy" that was drawn from the hat.

Of these two playbills, of which I possess the originals, I am naturally very proud.

### PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE.

On Saturday, January 12th, 1878,  
Will be acted for the first time, a new Play called

### DIPLOMACY.

Adapted for the English stage from M. Victorien Sardou's comedy  
"Dora," by

MR. SAVILLE ROWE and MR. BOLTON ROWE.  
(Clement Scott.) (B. C. Stephenson.)

#### ACT I.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,  
'Tis woman's whole existence."—*Byron*.

#### ACT II.

"Mark now, how plain a tale shall put you down."  
—*Shakespeare*.

#### ACT III.

"But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more—  
Farewell!"—*Tennyson*.

#### ACT IV.

"What do you call the play?  
The Mousetrap? Marry, how?"—*Shakespeare*.

The scene is laid in the First Act at Monte Carlo, afterwards in Paris M. Beauclerc's apartment on the Champs Elysées, and an official room at the British Embassy. Time, last Spring. Artists, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Harford.

#### CHARACTERS.

<i>Count Orloff</i> . . . . .	Mr. Bancroft.
<i>Baron Stein</i> . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Cecil.
<i>Mr. Beauclerc</i> . . . . .	Mr. John Clayton.
<i>Captain Beauclerc</i> . . . . .	Mr. Kendal.
<i>Algie Fairfax</i> . . . . .	Mr. Sugden.
<i>Markham</i> . . . . .	Mr. Teesdale.
<i>Antoine</i> . . . . .	Mr. Dean.
<i>Marquise de Rio-Zarès</i> . . . . .	Miss Le Thiere.
<i>Comtesse Zicka</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Bancroft.
<i>Lady Henry Fairfax</i> . . . . .	Miss Lamartine.
<i>Dora</i> . . . . .	Miss Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal).
<i>Mion</i> . . . . .	Miss Ida Hertz.

BALMORAL.

Thursday, 26th. October, 1893.

This evening,

Her Majesty's Servants will have the honour of performing

DIPLOMACY.

A play in four acts,

An English version of M. Victorien Sardou's "Dora," by Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson.

<i>Count Orloff</i> . . . . .	Mr. Bancroft.
<i>Baron Stein</i> . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Cecil.
<i>Henry Beauclerc</i> . . . . .	Mr. John Hare.
<i>Julian Beauclerc</i> . . . . .	Mr. J. Forbes Robertson.
<i>Algie Fairfax</i> . . . . .	Mr. Gilbert Hare.
<i>Markham</i> . . . . .	Mr. Gilbert Trent.
<i>Antoine</i> . . . . .	Mr. E. Mayeur.
<i>Shepherd</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Vaughan.
<i>Dora</i> . . . . .	Miss Kate Rorke.
<i>Countess Zicku</i> . . . . .	Miss Elizabeth Robins.
<i>Marquise de Rio-Zarès</i> . . . . .	Lady Monckton.
<i>Mion</i> . . . . .	Miss Helen Luck.
<i>Lady Henry Fairfax</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Bancroft.

ACT I.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart—'tis woman's whole existence."—*Byron*.

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"Mark now how plain a tale shall put you down."—*Shakespeare*.

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—*Shakespeare*.

The scene is laid in the first act at Monte Carlo, afterwards in Paris. Mr. Beauclerc's Apartment in the Champs Elysées, and a room at the British Embassy.

Scenic Artist, Mr. W. Harford. Stage Manager, Mr. W. Cathcart.

Acting Manager, Mr. C. G. Compton.

Director, Mr. John Hare.

The following selection of Music will be performed by the orchestra, under the direction of Signor Curti :—

MARSCH . .	"Der Marquis von Rivoli" . . .	<i>Roth.</i>
POTPOURRI . .	"Wass Kommt Jetzt" . . . . .	<i>Kral.</i>
SELECTION . .	"Rob Roy" . . . . .	<i>Foster.</i>
WALZER . .	"Neu Wien" . . . . .	<i>Strauss.</i>

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

Here are three important memories. I was present on the opening night of the little Prince of Wales Theatre under the management of Marie Wilton, on Saturday, the 15th of April, 1865; I was present, as already recorded, on the first night of the reopening of the restored Haymarket under the Bancrofts, on Saturday, the 31st of January, 1880; and I was in the theatre on Monday, the 20th of July, 1885, when I was proud and privileged to hear Henry Irving "speak a few parting words, written in verse by Clement Scott."

These are the words:—

#### A VALEDICTORY ODE.

- "A friend and neighbour from the busy Strand,  
Warned by the summons of Fate's prompting bell,  
Has come to take two comrades by the hand,  
And bid them both regretfully 'Farewell.'
- "Parting to lovers may be 'sorrow sweet,'  
To friends, all separation must give pain;  
But time, consoling, turns the travelled feet,  
And tells the parted—they may meet again.
- "No age or sickness saddens this adieu:  
No piteous cause I plead, no alms I beg;  
My toast is 'Triplet, here's long life to you,  
And years more laughter to delightful Peg.'"
- "The sailor sights at last his native land,  
The swallow follows to accustomed nest;  
So, two tried actors, toiling hand in hand,  
Demand at last toil's after-blessing—Rest."
- "Their steady course was fann'd by favouring gales,  
Their loyal purpose dimm'd by no regret;  
Sponsors they stood to infant 'Prince of Wales,'  
With life renewed the classic 'Haymarket.'"
- "Not to all artists, earnest though their aim,  
As retrospective vision there appears,  
The priceless gift of an untarnished name,  
The blameless history of twenty years."

" Fired by the flush of youth, they found a way  
To give to fading art a healthy cure ;  
The Stage they loved revived beneath their sway,  
They made art earnest, and they kept it pure !

" Shall we forget, at this their parting hour,  
How fact and fancy intertwine and blend ?  
Saying, 'The Stage acknowledged them a power,  
Actor and actress found in them a friend.'

" ' Ars est celare artem ' 'tis inscribed,  
Crowning this Stage, and fancifully wrought ;  
From great ones past this precept they imbibed,  
This needful lesson dutifully taught.

" Dramatic flowers they gathered by the way,  
And chose the brightest wheresoe'er it grows ;  
Never disdaining to contrast in play  
French tiger-lily with sweet English rose.

" With kindly Robertson they formed a ' School,'  
Rejoiced in ' Play ' after long anxious hours ;  
' Caste ' was for them, and theirs, a golden rule,  
And thus by principle we made them ' Ours.'

" Such an example, in the after age,  
Will throw a softening haze o'er bygone care ;  
We close the volume at its brightest page,  
But leave a blossom of remembrance there.

" Good-bye, the cup of sympathy let's fill ;  
We'll drink it deep ere sorrow's sun be set ;  
Together you have mounted life's long hill,  
And leave behind no record of regret.

" Good-bye, old friends, it shall not be farewell,  
Love is of art the birth and after-growth ;  
' Heaven prosper you,' shall be our only knell,  
Our parting prayer be this : ' God bless you both.' "

A few letters from my very old and constant friends, Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft and John Hare, about the date of my retirement from the active duties of my profession, may appropriately conclude this, to me and many others, most important chapter of dramatic history.

These letters will prove that there are at any rate some actors and actresses who can take the rough with the smooth, and credit the writer of criticism, however adverse to them individually, with good intentions. To have criticised these three most admirable artists for over thirty years without causing them unintentional pain would have been impossible. Still these three at least, out of the many, allowed me to know that they recognised the difficulty of my task, and cordially appreciated it. These three at least declared that the uplifting of the statue of the drama from the sand in which it was buried required strong shoulders and a cast-iron courage. It was no child's play; and required blood of the brain, sweat of the brow!

“PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE,

“Tuesday, November 2nd, 1875.

“MY DEAR SCOTTY,—The *Telegraph* stall, I find, has been sent to-day (as before) under cover to Mr. Levy; so through him it will doubtless reach you.

“Always believe that if you are compelled to ‘slate’ me, I shall like you none the less.

“Yours sincerely,

“S. B. BANCROFT.

“CLEMENT SCOTT, Esq.”

“GARRICK CLUB,

“January 22nd, 1883.

“MY DEAR SCOTTY,—Let me thank you very much for your kind and clever criticism on ‘Caste.’ Mrs. B. and I most thoroughly appreciate your knowledge of what poor old Tom intended to convey by his D’Alroy, &c. They are as much characters as the ‘Hawtreys’ and ‘Gerridges,’ and I know how much I felt this when, years ago, I did my best to play Sidney Daryl from that point of view.

"The old friend will doubtless have a short bright run, and then good bye to much that will mean but pleasant memories.

"Yours,

"S. B. B."

"18 BERKELEY SQUARE,

"October 29th, 1884.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,—As one of our old friends I think it may please you to hear direct from me, before the announcement appears in the newspapers, that Mrs. Bancroft and I have resolved to make the coming season our last of management. We shall soon reach the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the dear old Prince of Wales, which we think a fitting time to be released from anxieties of that kind, and I hope between us we have earned the rest we have worked very hard for.

"Ever sincerely,

"S. B. BANCROFT."

"18 BERKELEY SQUARE,

"March 4th, 1885.

"MY DEAR SCOTT,—Let me send you a brief but cordial assurance that I value very much your kind words about my performance of 'Triplet.' It is always delightful to an actor to find his meanings so got under.

"Yours ever,

"S. B. B."

This was after Squire Bancroft retired from management:—

"18 BERKELEY SQUARE,

"May 19th, 1889.

"DEAR SCOTTY,—I am going to act in the autumn—the mere telling you so makes me tremble—but it was impossible to resist the manner in which Irving has



wished me to play the Abbé Latour in 'The Dead Heart.'

"Announce the fact as you like on Friday, but perhaps you will let me suggest a line or two from our book, when Irving asked me to be his Château Renaud in the 'Corsican Brothers' (see vol. ii., p. 220). 'Perhaps before my career as an actor is finally closed, it may be that the pleasure of appearing with my old friend will not be denied me.

"Yours ever,  
"B."

This letter refers to the Bancrofts' desire that I should adapt for them Octave Feuillet's "Le Village," long known before on the English stage as the "Cosy Couple" of George Henry Lewes (Slingsby Laurence).

"HOTEL DU LOUVRE,  
"Thursday.

"MY DEAR SCOTTY,—Paris means *shopping*! and I know you will forgive this miserably shabby return for your long letter.

"We have seen 'Le Village.' I quite agree with your view of the *acting*, but the piece is right enough. Wire into it, old man, hard and fast, making all you can of the dear little old lady. She is not a great part, but I can quite see what my wife can do for her. I send some titles.

"'A Fireside' (still my favourite).

"'Evening.'

"'Winter.'

"'The Vicarage.'

"'Darby and Joan.'

"'Age.'

"'Rest,' or (this was added in Mrs. Bancroft's handwriting, a title she had wittily bestowed on me in con-

sequence of the wars I had been in throughout our long acquaintance) 'Poor Scotty.'

"We go, I think, on Sunday to Boulogne (Hôtel du Pavillon).

"Marie says you must not encourage morbid thoughts about ——. She is herself the result of an odd weird childhood.

"Yours ever, in demon haste,

"S. B. B."

This was from Mrs. Bancroft, as a postscript to her husband's letter :—

"Don't you worry yourself about ——. *I* was a most *wonderful child*—*nobody* thought *I* was going to live. Spoke Collins' 'Ode to the Passions' with all the music at *five*, danced nigger dances at *twenty*, played high comedy at *thirty*, and became an abject duffer at *thirty-five* !

"Ever thine,

"DUMR CRAMBO."

"18 BERKELEY SQUARE,

"November 21st, 1894.

"DEAR SCOTTY,—We are going to do the dear old 'Vicarage' for a charity, after full thirteen years ! I expect it will give us some trouble to 'recover.'

"Yours ever,

"B."

"THE GRANVILLE HOTEL, ST. LAWRENCE-ON-SEA,

"December 28th, 1898.

"DEAR SCOTTY,—The book is sure to be as interesting as it will certainly be most valuable, and I shall be glad to be among the original subscribers to it. You once wrote of me that I 'should have made a splendid editor' ;

blame, therefore, your own verdict for my venturesomeness in here and there altering your 'prospectus.'

"It will be just thirty years since the production of 'School.' 'First nights' at the play became a feature of the town under our management; in earlier days folks cannily 'waited for the verdict,' but I cannot remember what celebrities were present, although I distinctly recollect writing on the day *before* to a friend, that we were on 'the eve of the greatest success we had then known.'

"I think, with regard to ourselves, you will perhaps find the plum in your criticism of the 'School for Scandal,' and I will tell you something as to my views on that play.

"Home on Saturday.

"Yours always,

"B.

"A bright 1899 to you both is our joint wish."

This refers to my last criticism on "School" in the *Daily Telegraph* :—

"18 BERKELEY SQUARE,

"January 9th, 1899.

"DEAR SCOTTY,—It is delightful to her old husband to find the truly described 'genius' of dear 'Nummy' remembered.

"Yours always,

"THE GRANVILLE HOTEL, ST. LAWRENCE-ON-SEA,

"Thursday.

"DEAR CLEMENT,—You well deserve your rest, and I trust you will enjoy your freedom. It has been a very long service, but feel certain that if you did not make a halt, a halt would have been a necessity, for human strength must have given way at last! You will be

able to do as Charles Lamb did, 'walk about, and trot to and fro.' Long may you both live to know what *peace* means!

"When you see 'School,' think of your 'Nummy Tighe' now and then. Do you remember the night you came to the revival at the Haymarket? After the examination scene in the second act, you came round, with the tears of laughter on your cheeks, and said, 'Oh, how I have enjoyed it!' When I asked if I had introduced too much fun, you answered, 'No! no! go on, I have almost shrieked my heart out.'

"The mention of 'School' brings back no end of recollections. I remember the day Tom read the play to me. When he finished reading the love scene in the second act, between Bella and Lord Beaufoy, I asked, 'Have you not written a companion one for Jack Poyntz and Naomi?' He had not, but on my suggestion he went home and wrote the scene which follows. He always gave me a *carte blanche* to add good lines and business whenever I thought fit; and I did not fail to avail myself of the opportunities, and, as proof of his approval, the introductions were always printed in the books. The letter from Jack Poyntz to Naomi which she reads in the last act, was made considerably longer by introductions, and the poor fellow used to sit in a box, laughing loudly. And so it was with the last acts of 'Ours' and 'Caste.'

"When 'M.P.' was written, he was in great difficulty about a title for it—he could not think of one. At last I wrote him a line suggesting 'M.P.', and he wrote back '*delighted!*' and jokingly added, 'I owe you £500 for that!' Never shall I forget his poor wan and anxious face when he came to know the result of my reading of 'Society,' or rather Byron read it to me rather in

despair, as Tom's writing was very difficult, and type-writing was not known. The play was refused by other managers, and I still possess a letter of Buckstone's saying, 'It must fail wherever it is produced.'

"Byron would not advise our doing it, but I clung to it. Mr. Hare, who was but twenty-one years of age then, had seen the play when acted for a few nights at Liverpool, and asked 'Bogey' to use his influence with me to give him the part of Lord Ptarmigan. Tom did not like the idea *at all*, so young a man playing so old a one. But I got my way, *et voilà tout*! Byron introduced Tom to my notice as an old friend of his—very poor and *sad*. Tom was never tired of saying that the Prince of Wales was his home, and he cared not to write for any other house. I often read through the dedication of 'Caste.'

"I gave to Miss Addison the original jug which she carried in 'School,' and I possess the glass slippers and Naomi's shoes worn by me during the first run of 396 nights, and those of Polly Eccles. Mr. Hastings asked me to give him the letter I read in the last act of 'School,' on the night of my last appearance as Naomi.

"That letter had been used I don't know how many hundred nights!

"Oh! dear! I could go on and on and weary you with my recollections, but I must stop.

"One thing more, though. Tom was writing a fine part for me during his last illness, and spoke to me so strangely about it very shortly before he died.

"Be sure that we both, Bogey and I, most earnestly trust that you will enjoy your well-earned repose, and live to see many years of peace and happiness.

"I shall hope to see you soon.

"God bless us every one!"

"We return home on Saturday.

"Yours ever,

"M. E. BEE.

"I should like to have acted 'Nummy' again, just to hear you laugh!

"I am not quite sure whether the first run of 'School' was 396 or 397 nights, but our book will tell you.

"My favourite parts were Naomi Tighe, Lady Teazle, Peg Woffington, and Mrs. Haygarth in 'The Vicarage.' I was very fond too of Lady Franklin in 'Money.' I don't know of course if you care to be told all this."

This is one of the most valuable letters that I received when my retirement from the *Daily Telegraph* was announced:—

"KING'S PRIVATE HOTEL, BRIGHTON,

"December 13th, 1898.

"MY DEAR CLEMENT,—So the die is cast, and you have finally taken the step which severs your long and honourable connection with the *Daily Telegraph*. I am truly sorry, and so will all be who love the stage and have its welfare at heart.

"In a lifetime's work it is given to no man to say that he has made no mistakes; and if you are no exception to that rule, you can point to a lifetime devoted to the stage, with the results that you have largely helped to give it its proper place in the public estimation, by the earnestness, the critical ability, and the enthusiasm with which you have approached your work.

"If you have made some enemies during your long career, you have made more friends; and even the

former will, I am sure, very soon only remember the services you have rendered to the stage, and forget and forgive the soreness engendered by any temporary indiscretion.

“You have, I hope, very many years of useful work still before you; and that you may have health and strength to enable you to do it, is the sincere wish of

“Your old friend,

“JOHN HARE.”

“35 CHESTER TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK,

“January 5th, 1899.

“MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—The enclosed card explains itself. A lot of old friends will be present on the 7th, the first night of ‘School.’ As it is not a new production, and I shall be above the suspicion of ‘chicken and champagne,’ I am asking them to come round and let us mutually wish each other a happy New Year. I need hardly tell you how glad I shall be if you and Clement will so honour me.

“It is sad to reflect indeed that the night will mark Clement’s last appearance as critic of the *Daily Telegraph*.

“Honestly it will sadden the evening for me—his departure from that paper, to my mind, is an irreparable loss to the stage, and those who have its best interest at heart. However, he has honourably earned his rest and doubtless needs it.

“He will doubtless find a sphere where he will be no less useful, but which will tax him less severely.

“With all good wishes to you both, from my wife and myself,

“Believe me, always sincerely yours,

“JOHN HARE.”

Thus far, then, of the Drama of yesterday.

Thus far of the story of the Stage, necessarily so briefly, and, alas! so inefficiently told, from the struggling days of William Charles Macready to that dawn of light struck with life and hope and promise by the Bancrofts.

Where, then, to start the Drama of to-day?

I think properly with the accession to the vacant dramatic throne by Henry Irving.

END OF VOL. I





